Cheat Code: Support Strategist
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Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
No Archive Warnings Apply

Category:
F/M, Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Hatsume Mei & Midoriya Izuku, Hatsume Mei/Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku & Nedzu, Hatsume Mei & Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Shinsou Hitoshi, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead/Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Shinsou Hitoshi/Uraraka Ochako

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Hatsume Mei, Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Inko, Nedzu (My Hero Academia), Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Maijima Higari | Power Loader, Bakugou Katsuki, Class 1-F (My Hero Academia), Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Kurogiri (My Hero Academia), Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Todoroki Shouto, Uraraka Ochako, Class 1-B (My Hero Academia), Mineta Minoru, Melissa Shield, David Shield, Kamihara Shinya | Edgeshot

Additional Tags:
Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, BAMF Midoriya Izuku, Support Department Midoriya Izuku, Hacker Midoriya Izuku, Slow Burn, Analyst Midoriya Izuku, Smart Midoriya Izuku, Scary Midoriya Izuku, USJ, Confident Midoriya Izuku, Chaotic Midoriya Izuku, Chaotic Hatsume Mei, She's a bad example, Shinso Hitoshi is along for the ride, Traitor Mineta Minoru, Uraraka Ochako Has One for All Quirk, angry cats, Vent Gremlins, Crack Treated Seriously

Language:
English

Series:

Part 4 of For The Want Of A Nail

Collections:

A Million and a Half Quirkless Izuku Midoriya Stories, Jeru's Top Fav My Hero Academia fics, Deku Has A Brain, Storycatchers' pile of heroic hero stuff, It’s 2 a.m. and I’m gonna read it again (cuz once wasn’t enough), Lina_Miramel's Fav BNHA Canon Divergence, RandomFanfictionsE.g.Anime_2BeRead, Bnha Bookclub Discord Recs, fanfics i ranted to my mom about but didn’t have the heart to tell her they were fanfics, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, Creative Chaos Discord Recs, theo's goodies, Fics which radiate chaos, MHA Fanfics That Are Better Than Sleep, Stories That Deserve More, Bnha fics that carved out a place in my brain, The Good Shit™, Top 10%, Izuku doesn't need One for All, Pacing's bests, DerangedDeceiver's Favorite Fics, Rhynes MHA favs, None For Yall, bernie's bnha rec list, Love these stuff UwU, EscapingMyProblemsEveryDay, Unfinished_best_bnha, BNHA Treasure Box, viri's hermit hole of good shit, ♡ >100k Fav Fics Bnha ♡, Mellow's Five Star Fics, Taste, Void's BNHA Favorites :D, FreakingAmazingFics, ✧□Wan Shi Tong's Library□✧, Unpleasant's MHA Recommendations, fantastic_fics, Assassin's selection of strange and extraordinary tales, call 911 for I have died at the sheer perfection that are these fics, The best of mha on ao3, Ace's Favorite FIcs, Lady's collection of PERFECT fics., Pthaloteal, Personal Favorites, bnha dekuism, I’ve given my heart and soul for this fic, MhaBestEverWorks, ☆□My Hero Stories Worth Your Time☆□, 📚 Fanfic Forum Discord Recs, Magnolia's Favourite Fics, BNHA to read, Shady BNHA Faves (Including Crossovers), Fanfics I’d eat again at 3 am and already have, Fanfiction ***I*** Deem Worthy Of The Name, isabella9792_readinglist, Fics that soothe my soul at 4am, Cuz imm'a Angel?, ReadAfterFinished_01, Extremely Specific Stories with Chaotic Vibes, SakurAlpha's Fic Rec of Pure how did you create this you amazing bean, My Escapism List, Ongoing Fics (bnha), Faves and must-reads, Fave Fics Found, The Gift of Caeculus, WHAT KEEPS ME UP AT THREE AM, p3paula's bookshelf, Best stories for sleepless nights, Kai's Eclectic Collection of Fics, MHA fanfics that'll blow you're socks off, Schattenfeuer91_SmartMidoriya_favs, Brilliant Bnha Fics, snibeids currently reading, Мои_любимые_работы🔵, Fics I've Read That Are Longer Than Pride and Predjudice, Paris Rereads, Mijwan's Favourites, Banco Fic, Mori’s Favorite BNHA Fics!, my hero academia: a medley, BaNHAmmer, Wolfis MyHeroAcademia Library, Slick_Quicks_V, craftyreader_favs, Flower Dragon's

Recommendation, Awakeat3chaos, .⋆˚.•*.↩My Bebu multiverse♡♡↬.*•.˚⋆., IZUKU MIDORIYA AND THE MAGIC OF REALIZING HOW F*CKED UP YOUR SOCIETY IS, Fics that made me stim, Still_to_read, Jenn Recs, Fics recommended by lunakaiii on tik tok, BnHA Golden Collection, Autiser's Favorites, My Favourite Bnha stories to read, Leannic Recs, ✧Chris's Best Izuku Fics✧, The SMARTEST MF: Izuku Midoriya, Fanfic_Recs_MHA, dawn goes down to day, Like A Favorite Sweater, I will re read it again insted of studying for sure, BNHA Rereadables 🔊, BEST BOI IZUKU_top BNHA works, Quirkless!Deku Fics, fics i can and will stay up to 3am to re-read, FinishedBooks, Completed stories I've read, Going Plus Ultra, My Favourite BNHA Longfics, cauldronrings favs (｀• ω •´)✧, MHA_fanfics_because_idk, Stuff ForestRGrey's Read, ✧I don't have a personal life✧, Writeass's favorite fics, My hero academia, The Cream of the Crop, .☄Thoth's Luxury Library☄., Leídos ^^, Best of the Best, i may not be a bottom but these are my tops, Fae Forest, T.S.S (This shit slaps), BNHA Fics that cured my cancer, Personal_Preferences, My Long loves □, All the Best to my tastes, longfics that butter my bread, 37's completed collection, ibisfavs, Flashfreeze Recs, Adore Able's Server MHA Support Course/Analyst! Izuku Collection, my finished reads, Goodsoup1543, mushi's current faves, Jo's fav to reread, Niks, Purrsonal Picks, Best Izuku Fics, CoffeeAt3, My Personal BNHA Fics Recommendations, my comfort fics, Everything so far, ✧BNHA FICS I LOVE✧, Izuku don't need no quirk, (mostly) just some funky lil Izu fics, THE 🎵 UBIQ □☠ THE 🎭 UNIQUE 🏵, Eatbook's Cherished and wanting more All Fandoms, Rereads157, Hand-picked by a picky-person, Amazing My Hero Academia Fics that are Completed, hello yes i can't stop thinking about these works, I need þerapy but instead I'll read comfort fanfics, □Lux's fav fics□, ‼□Fics I'd gladly lose my memory for so I could read them for the first time again, BNHAHappyFunFics, Aizawa Shouta Needs a Drink, just some incredible bnha ff, Still reading - bnha - my attention span is really short, My Entire History, stuff ive finished reading □🤷‍♀️🧢, books that make me go wowow, Very Chewy Fanfiction (/pos), Fics I need to finish reading, Find Me Where The Wild Things Are, oml these fics are bloody amazing, My Hero Fanfics, The Best Fics in Various Fandoms, my little problem hero, Completed but marked for later, Must Read Books and Series, Deku centric, ☆*: .｡. o(≧▽≦)o .｡.:*☆, Mays My Villain Academia, dadzawa: must protect izuku at ALL costs, bunnies' favorite fics, Izuku □❤□, vigilante Izuku Midoriya, Leo's Collection of Read MHA Shit, Saramria's favorites □, Beeps favorite bnha fics, Titanmaster_117's Favourite Rare Pairs, wxrds' serotonin :), A_collection_of_class_work, Mha fics that I

hyperventilate over at 3am

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Cheat Code: Support Strategist

by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)

Summary

After All Might gives Izuku a much needed reality check, he has to find a new dream. When he learns that the support course at UA offers an emphasis in Intelligence and Analytics, it sounds like the perfect new passion for him to throw himself into.
Who knew? Maybe *Hero Analysis for the Future* was never meant for his future *as* a hero, but for his future *helping* heroes...

This fic has a discord.

Notes

TV Tropes

See the end of the work for more notes

The Death of a Dream

Izuku numbly watched the door shut behind All Might. Kacchan had been right, he really *couldn't* be a hero. Izuku felt the tears prickling at the corners of his eyes and looked around. If he went home right now, Mom would hear him crying in his room and wonder what was wrong, and Izuku didn't really feel up to explaining himself right then. This rooftop, however, was completely deserted. Making his decision, he sat down and hugged his knees to his chest as he let himself break down.

He should have known that would be All Might's answer. He had studied quirks for years, so he of all people should know that a quirkless teenager had no chance of beating villains with strong quirks. He couldn't even beat Kacchan! He should have seen this coming, so why did it still hurt so much?

After a few minutes of this, he became vaguely aware of the sounds of fireworks in the distance and almost stood up to look before changing his mind and curling up even tighter as he sobbed harder. The fireworks would probably look pretty and might even cheer him up a little bit, but Izuku wasn't really in the mood for pretty things. No matter how cool they looked, fireworks wouldn't be able to put his shattered dream back together.

The explosions were a good background for his pity party though, Izuku thought with a wet chuckle. It was almost like the world itself was celebrating that he'd finally come to terms with reality. He couldn't really tell if he was sobbing or laughing at the mental image of Kacchan and his teachers in party hats, gathering around a cake with All Might's true form on it as they set off confetti poppers. Congratulations!

He was definitely laughing now. Kacchan would totally have a disgruntled expression on his face at being forced into a party hat, but Auntie Mistuki would probably just hit him on the head if he tried to take it off. Mom would be the one to cut the cake, and she'd look proud and relieved as she gave him the first piece and told him to be sure to pick something *safe* for his next dream.

Izuku took a deep breath and stood up, wiping the last of his tears from his cheeks. There was still a dull ache in his chest, and he still didn't know what he was supposed to do now, but...well, it probably wasn't the best coping mechanism, but he felt like his imaginary pity

party was almost like a funeral for his aspirations of being a hero. Wait, was this feeling grief? That would make sense, but it seemed weird to feel grief for something that wasn't a person. His dream was kind of like a pet, right? He'd cared for it for years and refused to let go, and now it was gone, so it was probably okay to be a little sad.

The sun had set sometime during his breakdown, so Izuku hurried straight home, only pausing once to check his reflection in a shop window to make sure his eyes weren't too red. He ran up the stairs to his apartment and quickly took off his shoes before digging in his backpack for his hero analysis notebook. Between the sludge villain and the koi pond, he was lucky that it was legible at all. He should put it in the freezer to save it so he could transfer his notes into another book, then he could carefully take out the pages that All Might had signed and frame them!

"I'm home!" He called out as he walked toward the kitchen. He should put the notebook in a plastic bag before putting it in the freezer so it didn't get anything gross on the food...

His thoughts were interrupted by his mom running at him so fast that she slid across the kitchen floor and almost knocked him down with the force of her hug, "Oh Izuku! I was so worried about you!"

Izuku looked at the clock. He wasn't that much later than he normally was. He knew for a fact he'd gotten home much later because he'd lost track of time watching hero fights, so why was Mom so worried today? She couldn't know what All Might had told him yet, could she?

Mom was still talking, rambling in her worry, "I saw about Katsuki on the news and I know that you take that route home sometimes, and I couldn't see you and you weren't answering your phone and I was just imagining what would have happened if the villain had grabbed you instead, because Katsuki was barely fighting him off with his explosions and…"

Izuku went cold, "What?! What happened to Kacchan?!"

Mom froze, "Y-you didn't know?"

Izuku shook his head frantically and stared at her with wide eyes. Mom pressed her lips together in worry, then led him into the living room and unmuted the TV. There was a young reporter on the screen, backlit against a few still-burning fires as Backdraft and a few other heroes lingered in the background.

"...the sludge villain seemed to be intent on suffocating his victim. Thankfully, the heroes on the scene were able to keep the others in the area safe until the arrival of All Might, who defeated the villain and saved the hostage, as expected of the number one hero. The sludge villain has now been taken into custody by police, while the hostage and several bystanders were taken to the hospital for various injuries..."

"They had to take him to the hospital?" Izuku fretted. "Is he going to be ok?"

Thankfully, Mom nodded quickly, "Mistuki said he won't even have to stay the night. The only reason they took him at all was because he apparently passed out for a minute or two before All Might got to him, but he's going to be ok!"

Izuku sighed in relief. He wasn't sure what he'd do if Kacchan had been hurt or died. It would have been his fault for distracting All Might and making him use up all his time, and Izuku wasn't sure if he'd be able to deal with that, especially since the description of the villain sounded like the one All Might had saved Izuku from, which meant that Izuku distracting him probably allowed the villain to escape. It was a good thing he'd already held the funeral for his dream, because there was no way he was capable of being a hero if he let villains escape like that. But Kacchan was ok, All Might saved him.

Oh no! Was All Might ok? Izuku quickly excused himself and ran to his computer to look up footage of the fight. All Might didn't look tired, but then again, he didn't look like a skeleton either, so Izuku knew he was good at hiding things. He almost melted in relief when All Might jumped away without talking to a single reporter as soon as Kacchan was safe. He was already past his limit when he talked to Izuku, and he'd probably had to go beyond that to save Kacchan, but that didn't mean he had to force himself to stay and chat. Hopefully he was at home taking a well-deserved nap.

Izuku spent the rest of the night studying the fight. The sludge villain was a lot less impressive when he wasn't drowning in it, but apparently the heroes on the scene before All MIght got there didn't agree, because they seemed at a loss for what to do. Izuku pulled out a new notebook and started analyzing. While it made sense for Backdraft to fight the fires, it would have been better to prioritize the rescue and have him dilute the villain enough for him to let go of Kacchan. It would have meant leaving the fires burning, but since there were more fires the longer Kacchan was held hostage, it would

have been better in the long run.

Mt. Lady could have helped with evacuation, especially if Backdraft was busy taking care of the villain. Her height prevented her from getting into the narrow street where the fight was, but it was wide enough that she could have reached her arm in and let people climb onto it from the upper windows. And if she could reach her arm in, it might even have been possible for her to grab Kacchan from the villain without ever stepping into the street, depending on how far down the street they were.

Kamui Woods and Death Arms were more difficult, but if Kamui had looped around to come at the villain from behind, he might have been able to grab Kacchan without getting in range of his hands. Death Arms could easily have helped with evacuation.

Eventually, Mom confiscated his notebook and forced him to go to bed, but Izuku's head still kept him awake for another hour going through all the possibilities of how that fight could have gone differently. Finally, his thoughts slowed down enough for him to slowly drift off to sleep with one last coherent thought:

Is there a way to help heroes work smarter?

A New Dream

Chapter Summary

Izuku researches the support course at UA.

Let's do something at school…

"Alright students, remember that your finalized high school application plans need to be turned into the guidance counselor by the end of the week." The teacher said boredly. "So if you want to make any changes, they need to be done by then."

The bell rang and Izuku hurried to put the rest of his books and get out of the room before Kacchan could corner him. Things had been kinda weird since the sludge villain incident a few days ago and it seemed like Kacchan was constantly two seconds away from exploding, even more so than he usually was, at least. It probably had something to do with the fact that he had to be saved, and he was probably thinking that their classmates were looking down on him for being weak, so Izuku just thought it would be smarter to avoid him until things calmed down a little bit.

Unfortunately, Kacchan had other plans.

Izuku had barely managed to get out the front gates of the school when he found himself being slammed into the wall. He coughed as he struggled to catch his breath again, clutching his backpack to his chest so Kacchan couldn't steal it. He had *just* finished transferring all his hero analysis notes into a fresh notebook, he couldn't let it get destroyed again!

"You heard what Teach said." Kacchan scowled as he held Izuku against the wall. "It's your last chance to change your fucking mind about going to UA, you damn nerd. You'd better take it, because there's no chance a worthless nobody like you is *ever* gonna be a hero!"

"I know…" Izuku muttered.

Kacchan froze, "What did you just say?"

Izuku took a deep breath, "I said I know, Kacchan. I can't even defend myself from villains, how could I ever hope to defend other people.

You were right, I'm never going to be a hero."

Izuku took advantage of the short moment Kacchan stood there gaping like a fish to pull out of his grip and run down the street, blinking away his tears. It was one thing admitting the truth to himself, but it was another thing entirely to say it to Kacchan like that. It made it more real, somehow, and even though the pain was a lot less than it had been when All Might first gave him a reality check, it still hurt.

And now everyone would know. It wouldn't take long for Kacchan to rant about it to his lackeys, and from there it would spread like wildfire and soon enough, the entire school would know that Izuku Midoriya had finally given up on his dream of being a hero. It would be too late to change his mind. But then again, wasn't it too late already? It had been too late ever since he turned four.

He was running out of time to find his new dream. Their high school plans were due in just a few days, but Izuku didn't know what he was supposed to write. He'd always wanted to go to UA because it was the best heroics school in Japan, but now he knew that he couldn't be a hero, it put everything into question. Maybe he should go to a different high school, since he didn't need to go to a school with a hero course anymore, but he still thought it would be cool to go to UA. It was where All Might had gone! He could just go into general studies...or maybe one of the other courses would be better?

Izuku ran a hand through his curls, wincing as his fingers caught in the tangles, and sighed. He needed to do a little more research before he made a decision. He sat down at his computer as soon as he got home and pulled up UA's website, navigating to the application page. He'd never actually read through the information about all the different courses, since he'd been too fixated on the hero course, but better late than never, right?

Thankfully, there was a page on UA's explaining each of the different courses and how to apply. Izuku started off by reading about general studies, obviously, since that was most likely where he'd end up. It seemed pretty standard, honestly. They would teach him the basic subjects, but Izuku didn't know how to feel about the fact that it didn't have any particular focus. General studies would look good on his resume, but that seemed to be all it would do for him. He didn't want to get bored.

Izuku bit his lip and clicked on the business course. There seemed to be a lot of money management involved in that one, which didn't

really appeal to him. The heroic analytics classes sounded slightly better, but they mostly approached things from a marketing standpoint, rather than focusing on quirks like Izuku did. He decided to put a pin in that one. If he didn't find anything better, business might be a decent option, but it wasn't going to be his first choice.

He almost just closed his browser instead of reading the page on the support course. He wasn't an engineer. He didn't have any experience in mechanics or fixing things and while he found the way support items interacted with quirks interesting, he wasn't really interested in making them. But he'd looked through all the other courses, so he may as well glance at support, if only to complete the set.

At first, the support course looked exactly like what Izuku expected. There were pictures of students standing with their inventions and groups of kids with grease covered cheeks smiling at the camera, a wide variety of power tools and other things he couldn't name in the background. Try as he might, Izuku just couldn't see himself there, but then he noticed the different tracks.

The business course obviously had different areas of emphasis, like marketing or economics, but Izuku had just assumed that support was like heroics or general studies, where all the students were grouped together and had similar goals. But about halfway down the support course information page, there was an explanation of different tracks *within* the support course.

The first was Invention, which the website said was obviously the most popular option. It focused on being able to create and maintain support items, specifically for heroes. Izuku had just kinda assumed that was what the entire support course did. What else could there be? Support items for civilians? But, UA was a hero school…

He scrolled past the Invention track down to the next option. Design. It focused entirely on the aesthetics of hero costumes, something that Izuku hadn't even thought about as being part of support. It was a decently popular emphasis, and the students worked frequently with the business school to make sure they were designing looks that could sell and with the Invention track to make sure any support items visually matched the rest of the hero's costume. Izuku didn't think he was really artistic enough to enjoy that, though.

That brought him to the final track, which almost seemed like it had been added to the list as an afterthought. Intelligence and Analytics. Unlike the other two tracks, there weren't any pictures advertising

that emphasis, and it didn't seem like it was chosen very often, but as he read the short paragraph, Izuku gradually became so excited he could hardly breathe.

Students in the Intelligence and Analytics Track of UA's Support Course focus on quirk analysis and helping heroes improve their quirk control and skill. Students are trained in how to obtain useful information to help heroes and detectives track down and defeat villains, as well as how to use quirk analysis to pinpoint villain's weaknesses. Interested students also have the option of taking courses in strategy if desired.

Izuku couldn't help but think of the heroes that stood on the sidelines and waited for All Might while Kacchan was being attacked by the sludge villain. If he joined the support course, he could share his strategies with them! He could help the heroes strategize better and use their quirks more intelligently to take down villains and protect people. It was too dangerous for a quirkless kid like him to be on the front lines, but that didn't mean he couldn't work behind the scenes to make sure the heroes had all the tools and information they needed so that they knew what to do! He could help the heroes work smarter!

It was perfect! Izuku glanced over at his collection of *Hero Analysis for the Future* . All these years, he'd assumed that the *future* he was preparing for was his career as a hero, but maybe this whole time, he'd really been preparing for a career in hero support! His cheeks were starting to hurt from how widely he was smiling and he was vaguely aware of the fact that he was mumbling as his brain spun with plans and possibilities. He would have to work hard for the next ten months if he had any chance of passing the entrance exam, but rather than being intimidated by the challenge, Izuku just felt invigorated. He grabbed a brand new notebook from his desk and wrote *Support Course Preparation* on the cover. Izuku Midoriya had found a new dream.

And this time, it was attainable.

Preparation

Chapter Summary

A time skip as Izuku gets ready for the entrance exam.

The final ten months before the entrance exam flew by almost too quickly. One of the first things Izuku had done after finding his new dream was research everything he could find about analytics and intelligence gathering. He couldn't find that much, which he supposed shouldn't be very surprising, considering that he hadn't even known it was a career option, but the things that he *could* find emphasized computer skills and making sure that his analysis was understandable to other people.

Izuku had worked nonstop to make sure he was ready for the entrance exam today. It was difficult, since UA's website didn't say what exactly he'd be asked to do, but he wasn't about to let that stop him! He threw himself into support with a passion, spending hours researching everything that heroes needed to know going into a situation and thinking about what he could do from behind the scenes to make them more effective.

His hero analysis notebooks had improved as well. He still labelled them *for the future,* but he was now trying to focus on suggestions for improvement and on increasing the speed of his analysis. Izuku had shifted the focus of the notebooks from just heroes to everything to do with quirks and even battle strategy. He filled an entire notebook just with analyses of villains he'd seen on the news, and another with random quirks that he found on the street. He'd also stopped taking them out at school so that his bullies wouldn't be tempted to destroy these ones like they had all the others.

School had surprisingly gotten a lot better for Izuku over the past few months. His bullies hadn't *stopped* after the word spread that he wasn't trying for the hero course anymore, but now everyone was at a loss for how to actually hurt him. He hadn't told anyone at school about the support course, since the high school application plans simply listed the school, not the emphasis. The teachers assumed he'd switched his goal to general studies and from what Izuku could gather, the other students thought he was going for the nearest high school with a high acceptance rate. As a result, no one could target his new dream and all their insults fell flat. Even Kacchan had switched to mostly ignoring him, or just calling him useless, which was a huge

improvement!

One of the best things that had come from his new dream, though, was actually his relationship with his mother. He hadn't realized just how much his old dream had come between them, but now that it was no longer in the way, they'd grown so much closer. Her worry seemed less like she was trying to suffocate him, and more like it was just how she showed that she cared.

When he'd sat her down to talk about his new dream, she had immediately started crying. Izuku had understandably started panicking, wondering what he had said wrong, but as soon as she had calmed down enough to be coherent, Mom had assured him that she was just so happy and proud of him. He hadn't been quite sure how to feel about the fact that her first reaction to him giving up on his lifelong dream was to be so happy that she cried, but there wasn't much he could do about it. Maybe if she had just believed in him earlier…

Izuku shook his head as he finished getting ready to leave. It wouldn't do any good to worry about what-if's right now. Mom was just trying to keep him safe, so it made perfect sense that she would be happy that he'd picked a safer option. She had been a little nervous about him still working in the heroics industry, but after he'd assured her that he wouldn't actually be fighting anyone, she'd calmed down and had actually been surprisingly supportive.

He carefully placed his laptop in his bag and smiled. Mom had gotten it for him as a celebration gift after he'd explained what intelligence and analytics was and it had actually been her idea to sign him up for computer programming lessons at their local community center. He'd taken to them like a duck to water and it hadn't been long at all before he'd started learning to hack. Mom didn't necessarily *like* when he called it hacking, since she thought that sounded dangerous or like something a villain would do, but Izuku had pointed out that it would be a really useful way to gather information. He'd be protected behind a screen and the only people he'd be hacking were villains, to make sure they couldn't hide anything from the heroes. She'd come around pretty quickly after that.

The last thing he packed was the portfolio he'd created to demonstrate his quirk analysis. UA's website had said that in addition to the same written exam that all the other courses took, the support course exam consisted of a portfolio and a practical. Izuku had spent months debating what to put in his portfolio before Mom had suggested

simply turning in one of his hero analysis notebooks. He didn't feel like those were *quite* good enough to turn into UA, though, so he'd decided to turn in a new analysis notebook that was actually properly formatted.

He'd picked five heroes and five villains to highlight, since the website had said he'd be analyzing both as part of UA, and he'd had Mom read through all of them to make sure they didn't just sound like his normal muttering. When he'd first started asking her to read his analyses to make sure other people could understand them, she'd pointed out that he wrote almost completely in run-on sentences and sometimes dropped words completely because his brain was moving faster than his hands could.

He'd focused since then on editing his analyses into a coherent whole and making them easy to understand. The heroes he would eventually be working with needed to be able to read though and find what they needed, afterall, so there needed to be some sort of formatting and he couldn't use a lot of technical jargon, not that he ever really had. He'd experimented quite a bit and had even looked up how professional analysts formatted their essays for inspiration. Overall, Izuku was actually extremely proud of how professional his portfolio looked once he was finished, and Mom hadn't had any trouble understanding it, so that was a huge plus.

Mom scooped him into a hug almost as soon as he made it to the kitchen, "Oh baby! Do you have everything? Do you have your laptop? Will you even need your laptop? It's best to just bring it, right, even if you don't need it? Or will that be weird? They won't see it as cheating, will they? Oh if only…"

"Mom, take a deep breath." He pulled away from her and smiled, "I'll be fine. I already checked the website, and support course applicants are allowed to bring any technology they think they'll need. I don't *know* if I'll need my laptop, but I want to be able to demonstrate my hacking if they ask me to."

Mom sighed in relief, "Oh, that's good. I'm just so worried! I know you'll be fine and safe, but a mother worries, you know?"

Izuku laughed, "I know. Don't worry, the support course exam isn't like the hero course one, so I'm not going to get hurt. Just be glad you're not Auntie Mitsuki today. No matter what the hero course practical is, there's bound to be some aspect of combat included."

Mom wrung her hands nervously, “Oh, I don’t think I’d be able to handle it. I know Katsuki can handle himself in a fight, but I’m just so glad you’re not trying for the hero course. I’m not sure I’d even be able to let you leave the house without having a heart attack.”

Izuku smiled sadly. His grief had long since faded to a dull ache and he hardly even noticed it anymore most days, but his nervousness about the entrance exam was bringing everything to the surface again. What if he’d made the wrong choice? What if he was meant to be a hero? What if he’d never really be satisfied with the support course? What if Kacchan was right and he really was useless and he failed the entrance exam and ended up living under a bridge and…

“Stop that, Izuku.” Mom hit him gently on the arm and smiled to pull him from his spiral. “I’m the one who’s supposed to be worrying so just leave that to me, and *you* focus on doing your best. Ok, baby?”

Izuku smiled and nodded in determination, “Thanks, Mom. I should get going, wish me luck!”

“Good luck!” Mom started sniffling as he put on his shoes, then started full-on crying as he waved to her when he got down to the street. Izuku gripped the straps of his backpack and took a deep breath as he headed toward the train station. He could do this.

Arrival

Chapter Summary

Izuku begins the entrance exam for the support course.

Chapter Notes

We got a TV Tropes Page!

Izuku actually ended up getting to UA a few minutes early, early enough that he didn't even see Kacchan, who should be taking the hero course exam today, on his way in. He looked up at the building, not even bothering to conceal his awe considering that he was far from the only applicant gaping at the fact that they were actually *at UA!* After a long moment, he shook himself and hurried into the building, taking everything in as he followed the signs to the support course exam orientation.

He ended up in a large room lined with desks that were almost completely empty except for a few other early arrivals like himself. Izuku swallowed nervously as they all looked up at his arrival, his anxiety already getting the better of him as he ran to one of the seats in the back corner. He *really* wasn't ready to meet his future tormentors quite yet.

After a few minutes of sitting in the oppressively silent room, Izuku decided that he needed to find something to distract himself. The longer he just sat there, the more he worried that he was somehow making a terrible mistake, or that he would fail the exam, or that the proctors would come up to him and tell him that UA had actually decided to not accept quirkless applicants this year. He could always analyze his fellow examinees and see if he could guess their quirks, but he knew that as soon as he started analyzing, he would also start mumbling, which would sound even louder in the quiet room, and then any hope he had of fading into the background would go out the window.

Izuku thought for a moment before getting out his laptop. From what he'd read, UA had impressive cyber security, so it wouldn't hurt to take a look at their firewalls, right? He looked at the clock, he still had another twenty minutes until the exam started and if he didn't do anything, he was going to go insane, so this would be a good way to keep himself busy and satisfy his curiosity at the same time.

The rumors really hadn't exaggerated UA's security. Anywhere that Izuku would normally look for holes or backdoors were patched up and defended, and he grinned as he had to get more and more creative the more he poked around. Most villains would probably just take one look at the programs and decide to go hack somewhere less secure. Maybe if he were to…

"What are you doing?"

Izuku yelped and slammed his laptop shut, leaning back as far as he could to get away from the girl who was suddenly *way* too close to his face. He glanced around the room to find that most of the seats were filled. How long had he been trying to get past UA's firewalls? And more importantly, how long had this girl been there and how hadn't he noticed when she got in his personal space.

Also, she was a *girl!*

"Uh, I, um…" He swallowed nervously, but the girl didn't seem to be backing off anytime soon. "Nothing?"

The girl grinned savagely, her pupils narrowing slightly, something that was made more obvious by the crosshairs in them, "If it was nothing, you wouldn't have been doing it!"

Were the crosshairs a result of her quirk? If so, then what was it? It was obviously something to do with her vision, and she seemed to be able to change her pupil size at will, so maybe it was like a telescope? That would be really cool! What were the limitations and...oh, she was still staring at him.

"Do you have a telescope quirk?" Izuku blurted out the question before his self control caught up to his curiosity, then promptly turned bright red and started freaking out. Of course, the first time a girl ever willingly talks to him and he has to make a fool of himself by asking about her quirk like some kind of creepy idiot.

The girl didn't seem put off by it though, in fact, her grin just got bigger, "I'll tell you about my quirk if you tell me what you were doing on your computer!"

Izuku thought for a moment. He *really* wanted to know more about her quirk, but...would she think he was weird? What was he thinking? She *already* thought he was weird! And he didn't know why, maybe it was because she had gotten so close to him despite never meeting him before, but she didn't really seem like the type to stop talking to

people just because they were weird. Or maybe that was wishful thinking.

“I, uh,” he smiled sheepishly, “I was trying to get past UA’s firewalls?”

The girl blinked at him for a moment, then laughed loudly, “That’s awesome! Hacking UA before the exam even starts, what a way to make a first impression!”

Izuku’s eyes widened and his stomach dropped, “Oh no! What was I thinking? I just wanted something to do and I’ve probably ruined my chances! They’re gonna think I’m some kind of villain and…”

He was startled from his mumbling by the girl flicking him on the forehead, “Did you have any luck?”

He tilted his head, “What?”

“Did you have any luck hacking UA?”

“Uh, no?” Izuku didn’t know why she didn’t seem freaked out at all, in fact, she was acting like him hacking UA was a *good* thing.

“Too bad.” The girl shrugged. “That probably would have been a great way to get your foot in the door.”

Izuku thought about that for a moment, but it made his brain spin, so he just shook his head, “Well, I told you what I was doing. What about you? What’s your quirk?”

“Zoom!” The girl was grinning again and Izuku would probably have been intimidated if her energy wasn’t so contagious. “You weren’t that far off with your telescope idea, I can see things as far away as five kilometers, but I mostly use it to zoom in on tiny things while I make my babies!”

Izuku’s face went red again and he sputtered, “B-babies?”

She nodded, “Yep! I make all sorts of cool babies for heroes to use! My favorite baby is the jetpack I designed!”

She dug in her bag for a moment before slamming a grease-smeared folder in front of him. Izuku hesitated for a moment, but she looked like she was expecting him to do something, so he opened the folder and looked at the detailed blueprints inside, “These are really cool! Is this your portfolio?”

She nodded, “Where’s yours?”

Izuku put his laptop back in his bag and handed her his own portfolio before going back to looking through her blueprints. A lot of it was technical jargon that he didn’t understand, but after a minute, he thought he had a good idea of how the jetpack was supposed to work, “Is this based on Air Jet’s backpack?”

“Yep! It’s a super-cool flying baby!” The girl looked to be about halfway through his portfolio. “And these are really cool notes, Hacker-kun, but weren’t you supposed to bring blueprints for your babies?”

Izuku rubbed the back of his neck, “Well, um, actually, that’s only for the invention track. I’m applying for intelligence and analytics, so, yeah…”

“Hmm,” the girl looked back and forth between Izuku and his portfolio, then grinned, “that means that we’ll have to work together so I can make super awesome babies based off your notes!” She stuck her hand out for him to shake, “I’m Mei Hatsumei, future CEO of Hatsume Industries! What’s your name, Hacker-kun?”

Izuku grinned and took her hand, “Izuku Midoriya. Pleasure to meet you, Hatsume!”

“Oh just call me Mei, Izu-kun..” Hatsume said dismissively, ignoring the way Izuku’s face turned red again at the nickname. “We’ll be working together a lot once school starts, so there’s no point in pretending to be formal, don’t ya think?”

Izuku wasn’t really sure, but he wasn’t about to say otherwise and risk ruining whatever this was, “S-sure thing, M-mei-chan.”

Mei nodded and handed his portfolio back, seemingly satisfied with the nickname, and Izuku breathed a sigh of relief as he returned her portfolio. Wait, were they friends now? The only person he ever had a nickname for before was Kacchan, and they’d been friends once, so did that mean that Mei was his friend? Or were they just future business partners? What were people supposed to do with their friends? Izuku suddenly felt more nervous about his new friendship with Mei than he did about the exam, which he supposed was a good thing, since distracting himself from his exam anxiety was what he’d set out to do in the first place.

The background chatter in the room died down and Izuku and Mei

looked toward the front of the room to see Powerloader standing on the stage holding a mic.

“Oh my goodness, it’s the support hero Powerloader!” Izuku couldn’t help muttering, but Mei actually didn’t seem to mind, something he’d have to unpack later, “He’s one of only a handful of heroes in Japan that has both a hero license and a support license, which means he can make his own support items, but he normally focuses on making them for…”

“Welcome, everyone, to the entrance exam.” Powerloader cut off Izuku’s muttering and Izuku slammed his mouth shut so he wouldn’t start muttering again as the hero continued, “I’m Powerloader, the head of the support course here at UA, which should be the department you applied to. If you didn’t apply to the support course, you’re in the wrong place, so just leave and there’s staff members at the front office who can help you find where you’re supposed to be.”

There was an awkward shuffling for a moment as everyone looked around, but no one got up to leave, so Izuku assumed they were all in the right place.

“Alright, first off is going to be the written exam, which will be taken here. Staff members will be handing out the exam as I explain a few things, so just ignore them and don’t break the seal on your exam until I say you can begin. The exam is identical for all four courses at UA, but yours has an additional section with questions on support specifically. You’ll have three hours. Next, you’ll take the practical exam, which will be divided based on your emphasis. You’ll have four hours to create a functional support item, for the invention track, or a finished costume prototype, for the design track, based on the prompts given. You’ll turn in your portfolio when you start your practical exam.”

And now Izuku’s anxiety was back. What was *his* practical exam going to be? He’d gathered that there wouldn’t be many other applicants for the intelligence and analytics track, but Powerloader should have said *something* about it, right? Had he filled out his application incorrectly? He’d thought he checked it five times, but what if something went wrong? Or maybe they’d wanted him to use his intelligence gathering skills to figure out the exam before he’d arrived?

A vacuum wrapped packet was placed in front of him and Izuku forced himself to take a deep breath. It was too late to do anything about it now, and he couldn’t afford to be worried about his practical

exam when he hadn't even started the written one yet. It'd be fine. He could do this.

"Alright, does everyone have your tests?" Powerloader asked. "Begin."

Test Taking Skills

Chapter Summary

Izuku takes the written exam.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku didn't think that tests were normally supposed to be fun, and while his test anxiety definitely *wasn't,* he found himself forgetting to be nervous the more questions he answered. Even though the questions for the general section weren't extremely interesting, since they only covered the standard subjects he'd learned in middle school, they were challenging enough to make up for it. Izuku was glad that he'd studied in preparation for the test, because that meant that instead of being intimidating, the more difficult questions were actually *invigorating.*

And then came the support section. Izuku assumed that part of its purpose was to gauge each student's potential for the other tracks, because the questions were pulled from all three. Izuku felt like he did decently well on the design questions, even if that wasn't exactly his passion, but the only questions about invention that he could even make sense of were the ones that dealt with computer hardware. Maybe he should have studied mechanics a little more? Oh well, it was too late for that now....

To Izuku's surprise, there were only two questions about analysis and both of them were essays, so he could only hope that would be enough to show his skills and set him apart from the other applicants. He didn't want to have to think about what he'd do if his new dream got crushed like his last one had been.

For the first analysis question, he was given a quirk registration form and told to theorize about the strengths and weaknesses of the quirk, as well as give suggestions about how to use it. To his surprise, he actually recognized the quirk! It belonged to a retired hero named Glimmer who could manipulate light energy around her body in the form of sparkles.

At first, it didn't seem like a very powerful quirk, but Izuku knew better. The sparkles that Glimmer controlled didn't just look pretty,

they could get bright enough that looking at them was like staring into the sun. Tempting, sure, but definitely not recommended. As a pro hero, she had used it to blind and disorient her opponents, leading to a high rate of capture.

The drawbacks, of course, were that if Gimmer wasn't careful she could permanently blind villains, bystanders, or even herself. She had to carefully manipulate the light of her quirk to make sure that it was bright enough to be effective without causing permanent damage, which was a pretty fine line. She wasn't a well known hero, but from what Izuku knew about her, she had done her job well.

All of that was common knowledge, though, if someone knew where to look, so while it was necessary to list that out, Izuku didn't think that basic level of analysis would help him stand out. But what else...well, he was supposed to give suggestions, right? It felt kind of blasphemous to give suggestions to such a successful pro hero, but Izuku forced himself to look at it like it was any other quirk. The test hadn't actually *specified* that the quirk belonged to a pro, after all, so he couldn't let that hold back his analysis, not to mention that if he was accepted into the support course, he'd be giving pros suggestions for a living.

So how could the quirk go beyond what Glimmer had used it for?

Well, she manipulated light energy, right? But...Izuku's eyes widened and he started writing the ideas as fast as he could structure them out. Not all light was visible, so what if she could manipulate not only the *intensity* of the lights but also the *wavelength?* From the footage he'd seen, some of the sparkles Glimmer had used had appeared colorful, especially that one time she'd produced rainbow sparkles during a pride parade, so it was definitely possible for her to shift the wavelength within the visible spectrum. And if she could do that much, she could probably train enough to create ultraviolet light and infrared light, which meant that she could use her quirk to burn rather than blind and maybe even use it like a black light to find forensic evidence at crime scenes!

In the end, Izuku's essay ended up being three pages long, two of which were entirely suggestions based on his theory that Glimmer could manipulate the wavelength of light. It really made him wonder why she'd never used it that way. It would have effectively negated a lot of the drawbacks of her quirk, since she wouldn't have had to worry about blinding anyone if her light was invisible. It would also make her much more difficult to fight, since the threats wouldn't be as

obvious. It was almost a shame that she had already retired, because Izuku would have loved to see if any of his theories were actually useful.

He didn't recognize the other quirk, so he didn't have the advantage of previous knowledge, but then again, he also didn't go into the analysis with any biases, so it all balanced out. It was some sort of jet quirk that allowed the user to blow air out of the bottoms of their feet, which would probably be most useful for speed or maybe even for flight, depending on how long the hero could keep continuously blowing air. They would need specialized shoes that protected their feet while still allowing the air to flow, and the rest of their costume might need extra ventilation as well, depending on where the air came from. It was probable that the quirk actually worked by taking air in through the skin to power the quirk, or maybe it was powered by the breath?

If the hero could manipulate the temperature of the air, that opened a whole new field of opportunities. He could use hot air to make himself rise faster, or cool air to help victims during fire rescues! There were just so many possibilities, but Izuku limited those speculations to less than a page. He didn't know if temperature manipulation was actually within the limits of the quirk, so he didn't want to waste too much time on suggestions that might not actually be useful. Instead, Izuku tried to focus his analysis on ideas that were possible with only the information he'd been given. Beyond mobility, the quirk could probably be used to impair an opponent's vision, since if the hero could aim the jets at a villain's eyes, it would dry them out pretty quickly. It would be difficult to keep one's eyes open in a targeted windstorm, but even a brief puff to the face would force the villain to blink, which could make him a perfect counter to Eraserhead if he came up on him from behind.

Izuku debated about whether he should actually include that tidbit before deciding to just leave it in. It probably wasn't necessary, but at the same time, any little bit of information could mean the difference between being accepted to his dream school or having to find a third dream in under a year, so Izuku didn't want to take any chances. It couldn't hurt, right? Unless they thought it was creepy. What if they thought he was creepy? But then again, the entire analysis section *was* kinda creepy, just by the way it was designed...but what if his classmates were right and his notebooks weren't useful at all and he made UA hate him because he saw too many weaknesses in the quirks they gave him?

Izuku hurried and finished the essay before he could work himself into a panic about it and used the rest of the time to check his answers in the general section as a way to distract himself. He was already here, at UA, taking the entrance exam, so it was way too late to second guess himself now, right? And maybe UA would be like Mei, who didn't think he was creepy at all, but maybe that was because Mei was a little creepy herself?

By the time Powerloader announced the end of the test, Izuku had successfully talked himself down from his anxiety attack. Ectoplasm must be one of the teachers at UA, because it was his clones that came to collect everyone's tests once time was called. It was kind of surreal that there were so many real pro-heroes in the building right now. Izuku hoped that, if he actually got into UA, he'd be able to reign in his inner fanboy enough to not make a fool of himself around every single one of the teachers. Oh boy, yeah, that was gonna be difficult.

As soon as Ectoplasm grabbed her test, Mei was immediately back in Izuku's personal space, grinning like a madwoman, "How did you do Izu-kun? I bet those analysis questions were a piece of cake for you, huh? I could make so many babies to help those heroes, it's amazing! I already have so many ideas! Maybe that's what I'll build in the practical, but I have so many other baby ideas too...oooh, this is gonna be so much fun!"

Izuku couldn't help smiling as Mei cackled, even if the other examinees were shooting them strange looks, but her ramblings reminded him that he *still* didn't know what his practical exam was going to be. Analysts didn't have anything physical to show off, unlike inventors and designers, so what were they going to ask him to do? And why didn't Powerloader mention it along with the other courses?

After a few minutes, they were excused to make their way to the practical exams and there was a flurry of movement as all the examinees stretched and gathered their things to leave the room.

Izuku turned to Mei and smiled, "Good luck on your practical, Mei-chan! I hope you make it in."

"My babies are amazing, the proctors won't be able to ignore them!" Mei declared confidently. "And you're not allowed to fail, either, Izu-kun. You have to make it into UA so we can make awesome babies together!"

Izuku sputtered and turned red, but Mei was already skipping toward

the doors. He was definitely going to have to get used to the way she phrased things. Did she even realize how she sounded, or did she just not care? Honestly, from what Izuku had seen from her so far, it could be either one. Still, it was comforting to know that he'd have at least one friend if he made it into the support course. Well, one person who didn't hate him at the very least. That was gonna be weird.

Izuku shook his head and grabbed his bag, then made his way to the front of the room, where Powerloader was sitting at a large desk next to the pro hero Midnight, who must have arrived sometime while they were taking the written exam. Izuku didn't want to interrupt their conversation, but he also didn't want to be late to the practical just because he didn't know where it was. There was a possibility that there were signs outside that he could follow, since that seemed to be the case for the invention and design tracks, but considering that Powerloader hadn't even mentioned the analysis track since Izuku had arrived, he wasn't willing to bet on that.

Izuku hesitated another moment before speaking, he was gonna feel so stupid if they told him to to just follow the signs, "Um, excuse me?"

Midnight stopped halfway through whatever story she had been telling and both heroes turned to look at Izuku, who fidgeted in place at the sudden attention.

"Hey, hot stuff." Midnight purred. "What can we do for you?"

"I was just wondering, um," Izuku grimaced. Way to make a good first impression. "Do you know where the intelligence and analytics test will be? I mean, of course you know, you're in charge, it's just that you didn't say anything about it, Powerloader, sir, so I, um, just was kinda confused and…"

Izuku trailed off awkwardly. The heroes seemed a little shocked, for some reason, but they didn't seem annoyed by his question, so that was something. Powerloader flipped through some papers on the desk in front of him before looking up at Izuku again, "You're Izuku Midoirya, correct?"

Izuku nodded and the heroes shared a look that Izuku couldn't read before Powerloader turned back to him, "Sorry for the confusion, Midoirya, it's just that most years, we don't actually have any applicants for that emphasis, so it's easy to forget it exists. Since you're the only one applying, it honestly slipped my mind, so I went on autopilot and gave the same spiel I give every year. Sorry."

“O-oh.” Izuku swallowed, suddenly even more insecure. “I knew it wasn’t as popular, but I thought there’d be at least a few others…”

“Oh, you’re so cute, I could just eat you up!” Midnight cooed. “Are you sure you don’t want to switch to the design track? I’m a lot more fun than that scheming old rat.”

“W-what?” Izuku sputtered. “T-the rat?”

Powerloader glared at her, “Sorry about her, Midnight teaches art here at UA, which puts her at the head of the design emphasis, which *still doesn’t give her any right to steal students from the rest of us!* ” Midnight stuck her tongue out at him, but otherwise didn’t interrupt. “And most students who end up emphasising in intelligence and analytics are recruited by Nedzu after they show potential in other courses. We’re not used to people applying for analytics right off the bat.”

Izuku didn’t know how to respond to that, so he just nodded, “So, um, about the practical…?”

“I’ll take him!” Midnight squealed. “We can get to *know* each other better.”

“Don’t you have your own practical to run?” Powerloader said dryly. “You’d better go before your students spread paint everywhere, I’ll show Midoriya where to go.”

“Let’s be honest, if anyone is going to destroy the room, it’s going to be *your* brats, not mine, but okay.” Midnight pouted for a second, then shot Izuku a wink. “Good luck, hot stuff. You’re gonna need it.”

“Ignore her.” Powerloader said as he stood. “She’s just a tease.”

Izuku jogged after Powerloader as they walked through the maze of hallways to...wherever they were going. No one had actually said where that was yet. His mind was still reeling from the revelation that he was the only applicant for intelligence and analytics, “So, um, should I be worried?”

Powerloader shrugged, “I honestly don’t know. Like I said, most people don’t apply to this track, so I don’t actually know what the practical consists of, but you wouldn’t have made it this far if you didn’t have some kind of skill or interest in it, so you’ll probably be fine.”

“Um, do the other applicants usually make it in?” Izuku asked. “I know there’s not many, but…”

Izuku was interrupted when a door in front of them swung open. When he glanced at Powerloader, the man looked tired, but not necessarily surprised, so Izuku turned back to the doorway, his eyes widening as he realized *who* exactly stood there.

“Hello, Midoriya.” Nedzu’s grin was wide enough for it to be slightly unsettling. “You must be the one who was poking around my servers this morning.”

Chapter End Notes

> When you recycle throw-away OCs from one of your other stories because you already put in the work to figure out how their quirk worked...
> Also, people were commenting last chapter on how long the written test was. I based it off of AP exams, which normally take several hours, not that I've taken one recently, but that's what I remember.

Practical

Chapter Summary

Izuku meets with Nedzu for his practical exam.

Izuku gaped at Nedzu, *the* Nedzu, principal of UA and tried not to fanboy. He failed, “Oh my goodness, you’re Nedzu! One of the few animals with a quirk, although that is becoming more common as animals evolve alongside humans, but High Specs gives you hyper intelligence and…” suddenly, Izuku’s brain caught up with his mouth and he realized exactly what Nedzu had just said, “and you caught me trying to hack UA before I even took the entrance exam…”

He really was an idiot, just like Kacchan said, wasn’t he? He was going to get kicked out of UA before he even got accepted just because he’d gotten bored and decided to do something stupid! Of course Powerloader wasn’t leading him to his practical exam, he was taking him to the principal, who was going to press charges and then he’d get a permanent record and nowhere else would accept him and…

“I’ll leave him to you, then. Good Luck.” Powerloader said. As he turned his back to leave, Izuku could have sworn he muttered something about the end of the world, but honestly, he was too scared of what was about to happen to pay much attention. He swallowed thickly and looked at the principal, who was still grinning at him. Maybe he was just waiting for Izuku to apologize? Well, apologizing couldn’t make things worse, at least.

Izuku lowered himself into a deep bow, “I am so sorry, P-principal Nedzu, sir. What I did was c-completely uncalled for and inappropriate. I, um, wasn’t thinking c-clearly and obviously that’s no excuse, but…”

“Oh, there’s no need for that, Midoriya!” Nedzu chirped. “In fact, what you did was quite impressive.”

Izuku straightened up in shock. The principal’s expression was hard to read, on account of his face not being human, but he couldn’t see any anger or malice, “W-what? You’re not m-mad?”

“Oh no!’ Nedzu stepped aside and gestured for Izuku to come in, “In fact, I was quite delighted! It’s not often that people are brave enough to try, so it’s quite fun to test my defenses against new faces. Tea?”

Izuku nodded numbly and sat in the chair Nedzu offered him. He still couldn't believe that he wasn't in trouble, but apparently Mei had been right about him making a good first impression. Or maybe Nedzu was just getting his hopes up to crush them later. It wouldn't be the first time.

Nedzu carefully poured the tea and set a cup down in front of Izuku, "So, how long have you been hacking?"

"Um, I think about eight months?" Izuku took the cup and held it while he waited for it to cool. "I only picked it up after I decided to apply to the Support Course. I, uh, I thought it'd be useful for information gathering."

"Oh, I agree completely!" Nedzu chirped and took a sip of his tea. "But I am surprised that you're still so new to it, considering your creativity this morning. Was applying to support a recent decision?"

"I, uh, well," Izuku chuckled awkwardly, "I thought that hero support was just inventing stuff. I didn't think to look into the analysis track until...um, sorry, I'm rambling, but well, since I really enjoy analyzing heroes and quirks, it just seemed perfect, I guess."

Nedzu smiled knowingly, "It's not often that we get young people applying to be analysts. Most people assume that support is simply invention of support items, like you did, and while analysis is an important part of creating those support items, many people overlook its potential in strategy and intelligence gathering. Speaking of your analysis, may I see your portfolio?"

Izuku nodded and dug the notebook out of his backpack to hand to Nedzu, who eagerly started leafing through it. Izuku wondered if he was just skimming his writing or if his quirk gave him the ability to speed read. If it was the latter, then how fast could he read? Was the speed limited by his quirk or could he train himself to read even faster? If he wasn't limited by his brain, then his speed would probably be limited by how fast he could physically turn the pages, but if he was reading something that scrolled automatically, like on a computer, how would that affect the speed…

"I'm not as fast as all that, Midoriya." Nedzu chuckled. "I still have to wait for my brain to catch up before I can turn the page, and while my quirk definitely helps, most of my speed reading is actually a skill I've cultivated."

Izuku flushed red and slammed his mouth shut, "Sorry, I know my

muttering is creepy."

"On the contrary, it was a wonderful demonstration of your real-time analysis skills." Nedzu said simply, turning back to the portfolio, "And while it will most likely be useful to learn to be aware of when you are muttering, there is nothing inherently wrong with the habit."

Izuku's eyes widened and he stared at Nedzu silently while he finished the portfolio. His muttering...wasn't bad? That just seemed so weird to him. Kacchan had always said that it was annoying and creepy, but then again, he'd said the same things about Izuku's notebooks. Maybe it was creepy if a hero did it, but was simply an eccentricity when an analyst did, that would make sense. Yeah, an *eccentricity,* not an annoying habit that he had to get rid of.

Izuku liked that.

Nedzu finally turned the final page of his portfolio and set it aside, "This is quite impressive! I am assuming that you have been analyzing heroes for much longer than you've been hacking."

"Yes, sir." Izuku said. "I started analyzing heroes as a hobby when I was four, I just didn't realize it was a marketable skill."

"Would it be alright if I held onto this so I can peruse it more thoroughly at a later date?" Nedzu asked.

Izuku nodded, a weird sense of pride growing in his chest the more the principal praised him, "I already assumed that I wasn't going to be getting it back, since it's part of my application."

"Excellent!" Nedzu clapped his paws together. "Now, you have your laptop with you, correct?"

"Yes!" Izuku dug out his laptop and set it on the desk in front of him.

"Perfect!" Nedzu said. "Now onto the practical portion of your exam!'

Izuku swallowed nervously, thinking of all the ominous good luck wishes from Midnight and Powerloader, "Um, what will I be doing exactly?"

"As I said, I was very impressed with your efforts this morning, so I simply want you to continue what you were doing then." Nedzu's eyes twinkled with mischief, "I want you to hack into UA."

Izuku blinked away tears of exhaustion and frustration as he limped away from UA, sore from sitting hunched over his laptop for the past few hours. He'd tried everything he could think of, every back door, every little trick, even a hastily made virus, but by the end of the exam, Izuku had barely made it past the first round of defenses. It didn't matter how much Nedzu had enjoyed his portfolio, or how well he'd done on the written exam, he'd completely *failed* the practical.

What was his mom going to think? After all these months of her going out of her way to support him, would they grow apart again? Would she be disappointed in him? Where was he going to go to school? What job would even take a stupid, weak, quirkless nobody like him?

Suddenly, Izuku was rammed into by somebody going full speed. Immediately, he froze and curled in on himself to try to become a smaller target. Kacchan shouldn't still be here, should he? Nedzu had left sometime during Izuku's exam to go monitor the hero course practical and Izuku had tried to use that time to hack UA using Nedzu's computer but couldn't even crack the password. But Nedzu had come back pretty quickly, so Kacchan should already be at home by now. What if it was someone else who had learned he was quirkless and was going to beat him up and they'd never find his body and…

"Whoa, Izu-kun, are you ok?! What's wrong?!"

Izuku jolted from his spiraling thoughts and looked around, but the only person near him was Mei, who currently had one hand resting on his shoulder. Oh, Mei running into him was...actually completely in character, probably. It was just Mei, not Kacchan. And Mei wasn't anything like Kacchan so she wasn't going to beat him up. Probably.

Izuku forced a smile onto his face, "Nothing! You just startled me, is all!"

Mei frowned like she didn't believe him, "Then what's with the tears?"

He tried, he really did, but he only lasted about two seconds before those stupid Midoiriya tears were running down his face like some sort of stupid geyser. He hadn't even known this girl a full day and now he'd ruined their friendship or their partnership or whatever it was because here he was, crying in front of her and he *just couldn't stop.*

Mei had started rubbing his shoulder sometime during his breakdown and was probably trying to be comforting, but her muttering about

unleashing her babies on whoever hurt him was actually pretty intimidating.

“No one hurt me, Mei-chan.” Izuku finally got out between the tears, “It’s my own fault anyway.”

Mei looked at him skeptically, “Then what happened?”

That set off the tears again, but thankfully he could speak through them this time, “N-nedzu wanted me to hack UA for my practical, b-but I couldn’t do it! I failed.”

“Oh…” Mei sat down on the sidewalk and pulled him down next to her, ignoring the weird looks from the people passing by, “Are you sure they didn’t just want you to try?”

That made Izuku pause, “What?”

“Well, every failure is just a stepping stone to success, right?” Mei said excitedly, “And you said yourself that UA’s cybersecurity is absolutely insane, so what if he was planning on you failing?”

Izuku just stared at her, “If he wanted me to fail, then why did he tell me to succeed?”

Mei flicked him on the forehead, which was apparently her way of getting him out of his head and telling him that he was being an idiot, “A lot of inventions are just about learning the process. Even if they don’t work, they still weren’t a waste of time because they make the next invention faster! UA’s security wouldn’t be the best in the business if a first year could ram through it, right? They probably just wanted to see how you approached a problem that you couldn’t solve. They wanted to see your process!”

Izuku thought about that for a moment. It made a certain kind of sense, but then again, everything it seemed like everything Mei said toed the line between being reasonable and being absolutely insane, so maybe it was just that she was saying it that made it sound so believable. Still, it might make waiting for his rejection letter a little less painful, just so long as he was careful not to get his hopes up too high.

“If you say so…” he said slowly, “but what about you? How did your practical go?”

Mei grinned and immediately launched into a story that involved

blowing up her workspace three times until she finally got a working prototype of hover boots twenty minutes before the end of the exam. Izuku listened and laughed with her until his tears dried and Mom started frantically texting him wondering when he was going to be home. By the time he started walking home, his heart was a little lighter than it had been, and his phone was a little heavier.

It had a new number in it, after all.

Acceptance

Chapter Summary

Izuku gets a letter from UA

The letter was heavier than he expected. Well, logically, Izuku knew that the envelope was probably stuffed with all sorts of paperwork for if he was accepted, or maybe resources for if he wasn't, so it made sense for it to weigh *something,* but for some reason, it felt heavier than just paper. Or maybe that was an emotional reaction to the tension he'd been feeling ever since Mom had run in from getting the mail.

This letter was going to determine the rest of his future. This would determine if he remained a worthless loser or if he went to All Might's alma mater to become a professional analyst, so no wonder the envelope felt so heavy.

Mom hovered nervously, wringing her hands as she waited for him to open it. A few months ago, he probably would have gone to his room to be alone, but she had been just as involved in his preparation for the entrance exam as he had been, and honestly, after bombing the practical, he could really use the support.

"Izuku?" Mom said finally. "It's not going to get any easier if you wait…"

Izuku nodded and took a deep breath, then closed his eyes and ripped the envelope open like he was taking off a band-aid. There was a metallic thud that made Izuku open his eyes as something inside fell out and hit the coffee table.

"Is that...a hologram projector?"

Almost as soon as he said that, the disk came to life and a small screen appeared. Powerloader was staring right at the camera, looking somewhat tired, which made sense if he'd had to make one of these for every student in the support course.

"Izuku Midoriya." Powerloader began. "You passed the written exam with flying colors and turned in an impressive portfolio. However, I have been told that during the practical exam, you did not succeed in hacking UA."

Tears pricked at the corners of his eyes and he could feel Mom looking at him with pity as he stared at the ground. Of course he knew that he'd failed the exam! As much as he wanted to believe that Mei had been right about them not expecting him to succeed, he hadn't been able to push away the dread whenever he thought about the test. He really *was* a failure. He was a quirkless nobody, just like Kacchan always said.

"I'm glad."

Izuku whipped his head up fast enough to almost give him whip-lash. Was Powerloader...glad he didn't make it into UA? Was he rubbing it in? That didn't seem like appropriate behavior for a pro hero...

"If you had succeeded, I would honestly be concerned about the quality of our school's defenses." Powerloader chucked, "Thankfully, Nedzu didn't actually expect you to succeed, he simply set the task as a way to gauge your skill and drive, even though your portfolio was impressive enough to guarantee your admittance without any need for a practical. Take it from someone who has been working under him for quite a while now, impressing Nedzu like that is no easy feat. He seems to have..." Powerloader shivered almost imperceptibly, *"special plans* to help you realize your potential."

Izuku held his breath as Powerloader gave a tired smile, "As the head of the support course at UA, welcome, Izuku Midoriya. This is your support academia!"

Izuku's jaw dropped and he kept staring at the screen as Mom cried and hugged him tightly. He made it...He made it! He was going to UA! He did it! Oh, wait, Powerloader was still talking.

"Now that we've gotten that out of the way, there's a few housekeeping items I need to tell you about. There are three first year support classes at UA. Classes 1-F and 1-G cater to the invention track, while class 1-H focuses primarily on design. Because of the rarity of students entering the intelligence and analytics track, you have been assigned to class 1-F with the invention students. Your projects and assignments will, of course, be modified to fit your emphasis, and you'll also have daily lessons with Principal Nedzu, but you will still need to pass the lab safety test on UA's website before school starts, since 1-F meets in a lab rather than a traditional classroom. Please fill out the forms included with your acceptance letter to inform us of any equipment or materials you need so we can have those ready for you on the first day of class. Congratulations, Midoriya. I look forward to

seeing you in my class."

"You did it, baby!" Mom hadn't stopped hugging him since Powerloader had said he was accepted. "You worked so hard! I'm so proud of you!"

That was what finally pushed Izuku over the edge into tears of his own. He had had no idea how much he needed to hear that. All those years of her apologizing for him being quirkless and telling him to choose a different dream were over. His mom believed in him now! She was *proud* of him. That felt almost as good as being told he actually got accepted into UA.

"Um, Izuku?" Mom said, "I think your phone is vibrating."

Izuku listened and, sure enough, there was a faint vibrating noise. He looked around to see that his phone had fallen out of his pocket and was sitting on the couch beside him. Who would even be calling him? Kacchan was the only one at school who had his number, but Izuku was half convinced he had deleted it as soon as Auntie Mitsuki had forced him to put it in his phone. Hesitantly, Izuku answered the call.

"I got in!" He didn't even get a chance to say hello before Mei was shouting in his ear. "I got in, Izu-kun, I'm going to UA!"

Izuku couldn't help the grin that spread across his face, "Congratulations, Mei-chan! I knew you could do it!"

Mom looked very confused and Izuku suddenly realized that in his post-exam depressive haze, not only had he almost forgotten about giving Mei his number, he'd also *completely* forgotten to tell Mom that he met Mei at all! He'd been so depressed when he came home after failing the practical that he'd gone straight to his room, and then he'd spent the rest of the wait trying not to think about it, especially since he was never going to see her again if he didn't make it into UA. Now he had to explain who this random girl was to his mom. *Awkward.*

He pulled the phone away from his mouth and spoke quietly, "Mei-chan is…" well, Mei was acting like they were friends, but he still didn't want to assume anything, "We met at the entrance exam."

"Ah…" Mom nodded in understanding, but still seemed a little nervous.

"What about you, Izu-kun?" The question made Izuku tune back into Mei's ramblings, "Did you pass? Because if you didn't I'm gonna

march straight into UA and tell them that…"

"No!" Izuku screamed, but then realized that could be taken the wrong way, "I mean, no, please don't do that Mei-chan. I got in. Apparently, my final was just a formality and they didn't actually expect me to succeed."

"I told you so!" Mei cackled, "I knew they wouldn't fail you! That would be like ignoring my perfect babies! So what class are you gonna be in? Are you gonna be with all the other analysis students?"

"Um, actually, I'm the only one, so they put me in an invention class..." Izuku said nervously, "I'm in 1-F."

There was a beat of silence and Izuku was just starting to wonder if he'd somehow said something wrong when Hatsume squealed so loud that he had to hold the phone at arm's length just to avoid going deaf.

Mom kept looking between him and the phone, obviously concerned, "I-is she ok?"

"Um," Izuku shrugged helplessly, "I think she might just be excited."

"I'm in 1-F too!" Mei screamed. "We're in the same class!"

Izuku blinked in shock for a moment. He was going to have a friend in class! That hadn't happened since...well, it depended on if he was counting Kacchan as a friend. They'd been in plenty of classes together, but it definitely wasn't *enjoyable,* or at least not as enjoyable ashe thought being in a class with Mei would be, so he wasn't sure if that counted. Izuku grinned. He was finally going to be in the same class as a friend! Well, if they were actually friends.

"We should do something to celebrate!" Mei declared.

"O-oh?" Izuku held the phone away from his mouth again and glanced at Mom, "Um, would you mind if I went to hang out with Mei-chan? She wants to celebrate us getting in."

Mom frowned for a moment, "Does she want to come over for dinner? If she's your friend, I want to meet her. I could make your favorites?"

"Um," Izuku hesitated. Was inviting her over weird? He couldn't imagine inviting anyone from his middle school over, and Kacchan would probably laugh at Mom insisting she meet his new friend, but

Mei didn't seem like the type to get embarrassed by societal norms like that, so she probably wouldn't care, "I guess I can ask her…"

Twenty minutes later, Izuku was frantically cleaning the kitchen while Mom started dinner. What if Mei thought their house was too dirty? What if she thought it was in a bad part of town? What if she saw the pictures of four-year-old Izuku in an All Might onesie and never wanted to talk to him again? They were in the same class, he'd have to be careful to always sit on the other side of the room, or maybe behind her so she didn't have to see his face. Was it safer to take the pictures down? Yes, definitely safer to take the pictures down. Oh no, that was a knock. Too late! Abort Mission!

They both ran to answer the door, but before Mom could open it, Izuku suddenly grabbed her hand, "Um, before you meet Mei, I kinda need to warn you about something…"

Mom looked worried, "Does...does she have tattoos or something?"

"No, nothing like that." Izuku said frantically. "It's just...she calls her inventions her babies."

"Why would you need to warn me about…"

Izuku opened the door before she could finish and immediately got an armful of excitable Mei-chan, "Izu-kun! This year is gonna be so much fun!"

"Um," Izuku willed his face to go back to a normal color as he pried her away from him, "Mei, um, this is my mom. Mom, this is Mei-chan."

Mei's eyes lit up and she ran up to Mom, practically vibrating with excitement, "It's awesome to meet you, Midoriya-san. Your son and I are gonna make so many beautiful babies together!"

Mom immediately choked and stared at her in shock before she connected the dots. She visually relaxed and sighed in relief, "Oh, *that's* what you meant, Izuku. I see why you warned me. And yes, Izuku seems to be looking forward to working with you too."

"Good!" Mei grinned. "I'm so excited to see what babies I can make with your son's awesome brains. Did you teach him how to do that?"

"Um," Mom still seemed a little overwhelmed by Mei's energy, "what?"

“I think she means my analysis, Mom.” Izuku came to her rescue, “Or did you mean the hacking?”

“Both!”

“Oh, um, analysis has always been Izuku’s hobby, really. Even as a kid, he was looking at quirks and writing notes about them. I didn’t even know what he was doing until he showed me his first notebook.” Mom said. “And besides buying him notebooks and computer classes, it’s all him.”

“Wow,” Mei said, “I knew you were smart, Izu-kun, but that’s something else. You really taught yourself how to make your notebooks?”

Izuku nodded, “I, uh, just always loved heroes, so it just kinda…made sense? I’ve been doing them forever, so the first ones are really stupid and I think they’re probably written in crayon.”

“Cool, my first blueprints were the same! I knew they were blueprints, so I was *very* particular that I had to draw them with blue crayon!” Mei grinned and Izuku was pleased to realize that Mom looked more at ease now that she’d had a chance to adjust to Mei’s energy, “So what’s for dinner?”

Friends

Chapter Summary

Bakugo finds out that Izuku got into UA.

Chapter Notes

I impulsively made a tiktok. I'm clouds_notcomingdown

“Bakugo Katsuki and Izuku Midoriya, please report to the principal’s office, Bakugo Katsuki and Izuku Midoirya.”

Izuku froze in his seat as the classroom exploded in whispers at the announcement. He hesitantly looked over at Kacchan, but whipped his head down to look at the floor the second he saw the death glare that Kacchan was leveling at him. Why were they being called down to the office? And together? Was this about…? No, it couldn’t be about the teasing. They’d never done anything about it before, so there wasn’t any reason for them to do something now, especially now that Kacchan had gotten into UA’s hero course.

So that meant that Izuku was probably in trouble for something, but what? And why would Kacchan have to come too? Izuku gathered his things and walked out into the hall, careful to keep a few steps behind Kacchan so he didn’t think Izuku was trying to get ahead of him. Unfortunately, his efforts to not make Kacchan angry were in vain, because as soon as they’d turned the corner, Izuku found himself being slammed against the wall.

“What is this about, Deku?” Kacchan growled. “What did you do?”

“I don’t know, I swear!” Izuku held his bag securely against his chest so Kacchan couldn’t grab it, his eyes flicking down to the smoke billowing from his hand. “Let’s just go, we p-probably shouldn’t keep the principal waiting.”

Kacchan clicked his tongue dismissively, but released his hold on Izuku and kept walking toward the principal's office. Izuku took a deep breath to steady himself before hurrying after him, leaving a larger gap between them this time so he’d have a bit more warning if Kacchan decided to confront him again. When they got to the office, Kacchan knocked on the door and shot a warning glare back at Izuku before the door swung open.

The principal was a man who really seemed too young to be balding, but that didn't stop him. Izuku had been to his office a few times in the past, none of which had necessarily been pleasant, so the smile on the principal's face didn't do anything to put him at ease. In fact, it made the whole thing more unsettling, because Izuku honestly couldn't think of a single reason why he'd be called down to the office if he wasn't in trouble.

"I just wanted to be the first person from our school to congratulate the both of you." The principal said. "I can't believe we have not one, but two students from our school will be attending UA! And to think you're one of them, Midoriya. It's honestly a miracle."

Izuku gulped as he felt the heat of Kacchan's glare on him. Or maybe it was literal heat...had Kacchan activated his quirk? He wouldn't do that in the principal's office, would he? Would the principal let him get away with it?

He didn't know why he'd assumed he'd be lucky enough to not have anyone at his middle school know he'd made it into UA. It had been so nice these past months with nobody knowing about his new dream, but of course Aldera had to have been sent their exam results. He'd been even more of an idiot for somehow not preparing for the eventuality of Kacchan finding out! They were going to be attending the same high school, they'd run into each other eventually, even if they were in different courses. Well, there was nothing he could do about any of that now.

Izuku forced a shaky smile onto his face, "Thank you, sir. I hope we'll make you proud."

The principal nodded and gestured for them to leave. Izuku stood awkwardly for a second, waiting for Kacchan to leave first, but he just kept glaring at him until Izuku finally gave in and scurried toward the door. He just wanted to go back to class and pretend that the principal hadn't known *exactly* what he was doing by calling both of them into the office at the same time. He wanted to pretend that his new dream was still safe. He wanted to pretend that Kacchan was like Mei and was excited that they'd be going to the same school, rather than enraged.

Instead, reality grabbed him roughly by the arm and dragged him outside, taking him straight to an alcove behind the locker rooms that didn't have any cameras. At this time of day, even if Kacchan let loose explosions, no one would be on the other side to hear them, which

also meant that no one would be around to hear Izuku's screams. Not that they'd help him if they *did* hear, but it was the principle of the thing.

Izuku couldn't hold back a sharp cry as he was shoved against the wall for the second time in ten minutes. Kacchan glared down at him and this time Izuku *knew* that the heat wasn't just from his glare as he felt the skin on his chest blistering where Kacchan's hand was holding his shirt, "I thought you'd given up on being a hero, nerd."

Izuku trembled as he realized he'd never actually seen Kacchan this angry before. This...this was bad. Even worse than usual. What would happen if Kacchan killed him? Would they give his place at UA to someone else? Would Mei find someone else to make inventions with? Would anyone even notice he was gone?

"I bet you've had a great time laughing behind my back these past couple of months, haven't you?" Kacchan sneered. "Pretending to have given up, when really you were lying to us the whole time! How'd you even pass the exam, you damn nerd?!"

"I…" Izuku hissed in pain as Kacchan let loose an explosion to his chest.

"I was supposed to be the first and *only* student from this crappy school to make it into UA, and you had to go and ruin it!" Kacchan yelled. "Well, I hope your fun was worth it, because it's over Deku! I don't care if you somehow cheated and made it into UA, you're not gonna be a hero!"

"I'm in the support course, Kacchan!" Izuku yelled.

He was trembling from the pain, the anxiety, and now the emotional exertion it took to yell at his oldest friend, "I didn't lie to you, Kacch...Katsuki. I gave up on being a hero months ago. I didn't even try the hero course exam like you did, so don't get angry at me for chasing a dream that doesn't even affect you!"

He grabbed the arm that was holding him against the wall and shoved it away, then ran as fast as he could away from the school. He'd undoubtably get in trouble for skipping class, but they wouldn't risk suspending him or punishing him too drastically now that he'd be attending UA. They wanted the positive attention too badly for that. Maybe that was why they'd let Katsuki get away with everything they did, because he was the student with the greatest chance of making it big.

Izuku could hardly see through his tears as he ran home on auto pilot, shooting a text to Mei for her to call him when she had a minute. He didn't know what he'd say if she called, he just...there were too many emotions for him to process alone. Thankfully, Mom was at work, so he didn't have to worry about her seeing him barge through the door with tears running down his face as he went straight to the bathroom to bandage the ugly burn on his chest.

To his surprise, Izuku's phone rang just as he was about to take off his uniform. He looked at the screen to see Mei's name on caller ID, "Shouldn't you be in class right now?"

"I told the teacher that I'd accidentally added an unstable component to my cell phone battery and it was going to explode if I didn't answer a call right away." Mei said. "I've actually done that before, so they didn't question it."

"You've...actually blown up your phone by accident?" Izuku asked numbly.

"It wasn't a very large explosion." Mei dismissed. "But what's going on? Your text sounded really upset and now your voice is doing that weird chokey thing it does when you've been crying!"

Izuku tried to hold back a sob, but it tore itself out of his chest anyway, "Everyone at school found out I'm going to UA."

There was a beat of silence at the other end, "Isn't that a good thing? Shouldn't they be happy for you?"

"No, you don't understand, I'm quirkless!" Izuku yelled, then immediately felt like a bucket of ice water had been dumped over his head as he realized what he'd just said. He hadn't meant for her to know that. He hadn't...and he'd been looking forward to having a friend, "I'm sorry. I...I'll just let you go, you didn't need to leave class and you don't have to call me again, I'm sorry…."

"Oh no! Izuku Hacker Midoirya, don't you *dare* hang up on me!"

Izuku stopped with his thumb halfway to the end call button, "Did...did you just use *hacker* as my middle name?"

"Well I don't know your real one, and I needed a placeholder to get the full effect." Mei explained. "So, Izuku Hacker Midoriya, don't you *dare* think that I'm gonna abandon all the amazing babies we're gonna make together, just because you have some extra toe joint or

whatever. I know for a *fact* that you're smarter than that, so I don't want to hear it!"

Izuku's jaw dropped and he gaped at his reflection in the mirror, "I...what? You...you're still talking to me?"

"Obviously." Mei huffed. "So did one of your bullies get mad because you made it in?"

Izuku put his phone on speaker so he could focus on treating his burn, "I don't know if bully's the right word. We used to be best friends, so it sounds so wrong to call him anything other than that, but...well, we haven't really *hung out* since his quirk came in, so…"

"That was ten years ago, Izu-kun." Mei said bluntly.

"What?"

"That was ten years ago." Mei repeated. "If you haven't hung out in ten years, you're not still friends. Did he hurt you?"

Izuku hissed in pain as his shirt pulled away from the burned skin, "Today?"

Mei made a little exasperated noise, "Ever!"

"Um…" Izuku looked at the angry red burn in the mirror, "define *hurt."*

Mei groaned, "For someone who is so smart, you really are an idiot. Are you in pain right now?"

"If I say no, are you going to believe me?"

"Not a chance in hell, Izu-kun."

Izuku grimaced, "Then yes."

Mei sighed, "I'm gonna kill him. He did that just because you got into UA and he didn't?"

"Oh no, he got in too." Izuku ran a washcloth under cold water. "He's in the hero course, that's part of why he's so angry."

"They let your bully into the hero course?!" Mei yelled so loudly that the audio on the phone crackled.

“Like I said, bully isn’t really the right word.”

“Just because you were friends once doesn’t mean he’s not a bully, Izu-kun.” Mei said, then continued more quietly. “It also doesn’t mean you deserved it.”

Izuku’s hands stuttored to a stop from where he’d been gently patting the washcloth to his chest, “What?”

“You don’t deserve the way he treats you, Izu-kun.” Mei said. “What’s his excuse? That you don’t have a quirk? Not your fault! Try again!”

“Um…,” Izuku thought for a moment, “until about a year ago, I still wanted to be a hero despite that?”

“Not a crime.” Mei said. “Tons of kids want to be heroes! Try again!”

Izuku was starting to smile in spite of himself, “I kept complimenting his quirk, which he somehow interpreted as me thinking I was better than him?”

“...I’m not even gonna try, this guy’s an idiot. Next!”

Izuku laughed, “Um...I kept following him around like a lost puppy?”

“Anyone would be lucky to have your brilliant mind behind them.” Mei said. “Any other complaints?”

Izuku hesitated. He knew that it’d probably make Mei laugh, but it felt almost blasphemous to say, “He’s a dick?”

“Ding! Ding! Ding!” Mei cackled. “We have a winner! For real, though, Izu-kun, that guy is a jerk and if he ever comes to me for babies I’ll...ugh, I’ll...”

Izuku wasn’t sure he actually wanted to know, “You’ll what?”

“I’ll use cheap materials!” Mei blurted. “No, I can’t do that, my babies deserve only the best. Ugh, I’ll figure it out, but it won’t be pretty!”

Izuku laughed, “Thanks, Mei, that means a lot.”

“So, are you feeling any better?”

Izuku shrugged as he spread burn cream on his chest. It was definitely going to scar, “I don’t know. I just wish he hadn’t taken it so personally, you know? I wasn’t even trying to get into the hero

course!”

Izuku’s sadness had slowly been pushed away by Mei’s enthusiasm, and it was quickly being replaced by something he wasn’t used to letting himself feel. Anger.

“Couldn’t he just let me have this *one thing* without ruining it?” Izuku ranted. “I mean, he already made sure I *knew* my last dream was a big fat pile of nothing, so couldn't he just be happy with that? Noooo! He has to ruin my new one too!”

“Then don’t let him!” Mei said. “It’s your dream, not his, so that *bully* doesn’t get any say. You’re gonna be an amazing support analyst, Izu-kun, and he can’t do a thing about it.”

Izuku finished wrapping the bandages around his chest and grabbed the phone as he headed to his room to pick out a t-shirt, “I don’t know. It *feels* like he can.”

“I know…” Mei said. “But, hey! Now you have me, and we’re friends, and I’m not gonna let you give up! We’re gonna take UA by storm and that guy is gonna regret ever hurting you, ok?”

Izuku chucked, “Ok.”

“Good.” Mei said resolutely. “Now, did you find anything else out about that jet quirk from the exam? My hover-boot babies are having problems staying in the air…”

Katsuki

Chapter Summary

Izuku stands up for himself.

Izuku did his best to stare straight ahead and not give into the temptation to hunch his shoulders in an attempt to make himself a smaller target. As he predicted, the news that he got into UA had spread like wildfire since yesterday, though Izuku didn't know if that was Katsuki's fault or the principal's. The moment he'd arrived, Izuku had felt dozens of eyes on him and even now after half a day, his classmates just wouldn't stop staring. Some seemed angry, like Katsuki, but most simply thought he was lying for attention.

"Worthless Deku. He's just gonna drag UA down."

"Do you actually think he got in? Someone in my science class said it'd be possible to forge an acceptance letter if you were stupid enough to try."

"Even if he did get in, it's not like he's gonna stay there, right? UA is for the best and the brightest, so I bet they'll expel Deku on the first day."

Izuku actually kind of wished they'd actually say what they wanted to his face instead of whispering it as he walked by. It wasn't like they didn't know he could hear him, so really, it'd just be easier if they were upfront about it, if only so Izuku didn't have to feign ignorance. Maybe part of the reason Mei was so easy to be friends with was because she was so upfront about things. She might have a weird way of saying things, but Izuku was almost certain that she'd never lie to him, even to spare his feelings. If he asked her, she'd most likely say something about incorrect data making for bad inventions, but at least Izuku could trust her. Probably.

Izuku sighed in relief as he walked out the front doors, grateful to finally be away from his classmates. It was only a couple more days until the end of the school year, and then he'd start UA with Mei, so he could handle it until then. He could handle it. He'd already gone through so much worse.

He didn't run into any hero fights on his way home, so maybe he wasn't paying as much attention to his surroundings as he should have

been and it came as a surprise to him when he turned a corner only to see Katsuki leaning against the wall, backed by two of his cronies. When Katsuki saw him, his eyes narrowed, but he didn't explode. Izuku froze momentarily before forcing himself to relax. It wasn't his fault that Katsuki was mean, he just had to keep reminding himself of that.

Katsuki pushed himself off the wall and glowered at Izuku, "Where the fuck did you go yesterday, you damn nerd?"

Izuku did his best to channel his inner Mei as he responded, "I went home, Katsuki. That tends to happen after one gets cornered behind the school, but of course, you wouldn't know a thing about that, would you?"

He was prepared to dart away the moment Katsuki's cronies gave him an opening, but they were flanking him on either side and Katsuki himself was blocking his way forward. Izuku had been expecting him to explode at his last comment, but to his surprise, Katuski was quiet. It was terrifying. Izuku knew how to deal with a screaming Katuski, he even knew how to deal with an exploding Katsuki, even if that almost always ended up with him getting hurt, but this? This was new.

It wasn't that Katsuki wasn't angry, but that anger was simmering beneath the surface in a type of cold rage and some other emotion Izuku couldn't place. Maybe confusion? Was Katsuki confused about Izuku talking back to him? Or maybe he didn't understand why he'd gone home yesterday? There wasn't much point in thinking about it right now, because ultimately, it didn't matter. What mattered was that Izuku got away from here before he got hurt again.

"Well," Izuku forced a wobbly smile onto his face, trying his best to imitate Mei's confidence, "um, if that's all you wanted to ask me, then we should all probably be getting home."

Katsuki looked at him intensely for a moment before scoffing, "So, are you some sort of shitty inventor now or something?"

It took Izuku a moment to realize that Katsuki was talking about the support course. Of course, he'd made the same assumption that Izuku had at first, but he didn't really know if it was smart to let Katsuki know anything more than he had to about his new dream, "What's it to you? You're going to be a hero, Katsuki, I'm not. Isn't that good enough for you?"

"I told you not to apply!" Katsuki growled.

Izuku felt a swell of anger and recognized the feeling from his phone call with Mei yesterday. It wasn't his fault that Katsuki was a jerk, so it wasn't his responsibility to avoid setting him off, "I'm not one of your cronies, Katsuki. You don't control me."

A few small explosions popped in Katsuki's hand, but instead of being afraid, all Izuku could think about was the fact that Mei had apparently accidentally blown up her phone at least once. Hope mingled itself with the anger. Maybe if he hung around her enough, explosions would take on a different meaning. Maybe eventually, he'd come to associate them with friendship and acceptance, rather than disappointment and pain.

Izuku squared his shoulders, "Katsuki…"

"What the fuck is up with that, Deku?" Katsuki inturrupted. "Why the hell are you calling me Katsuki all of a sudden? I thought you were still using that stupid nickname."

Izuku took a step back. For some reason, he hadn't realized that Katsuki would even notice the change. He was just a pebble on the side of Katsuki's road to greatness, so what did it even matter what Izuku called him? But apparently, nothing that Katuski did made sense. He was angry when Izuku called him Kacchan, and he was angry when he didn't. There was no way for Izuku to win, and honestly, he was sick of trying.

"People have nicknames for their friends, *Katsuki."* Izuku said lowly. "And we're not friends anymore."

Katsuki glared at him, but Izuku held his ground. He wasn't going to look away first. He wasn't going to let Katsuki win this one. Eventually, Katsuki scoffed and stepped aside, "Whatever, Deku. Like I care what you do."

Izuku gripped the straps of his backpack and walked past him, tense as he anticipated an attack from behind. Katsuki, however, seemed just as tense. He might be pretending like he didn't care and that was why he was letting this go, but Izuku knew the truth. He had won. It filled him with an unfamiliar sense of victory and accomplishment that he'd only ever experienced when analyzing or hacking. It gave him the confidence to stop walking a few steps past Katsuki and turn around. Maybe it was petty and more than a little stupid, but Izuku wanted the last word.

"Oh, and Katsuki?" Izuku smiled slightly as they made direct eye

contact. “I’m not going to be a shitty inventor. I’m going to be a shitty *analyst.* Turns out, some people actually *like* my creepy stalker notebooks.” He turned and started walking away, promising himself that he’d have a panic attack when he got home, “See you at UA, Katsuki!”

Katsuki didn’t follow him.

Classroom

Chapter Summary

Izuku's first day at UA high school.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku tugged at the knot of his tie again, trying to get it to vaguely resemble a triangle at the very least, and tried to ignore Katsuki, who was glaring at him from the other end of the train. It was just his luck that they'd left at the same time and ended up in the same car, but from the map of UA he'd been sent alongside his acceptance letter, the support classes were in an entirely different part of the building than the hero courses, so they would have to head in separate directions almost as soon as they arrived and then he could meet up with Mei. Easy as pie.

Even though he'd already been there for the entrance exams, walking into UA as a student was an overwhelming experience. He hadn't even realized he'd stopped just outside the door until Katsuki roughly shoulder-checked him, knocking him over the threshold.

"Stay out of my way, Deku."

Izuku instinctively tensed, wondering if Katsuki had finally had enough of his new attitude and he was actually going to die before classes even started, but Katsuki just walked away, not even sparing Izuku a backward glance as he headed toward the hero course. He supposed that even Katsuki wasn't over confident enough to attack him in the halls of the best hero school in Japan, where a pro hero could walk around the corner at any minute. Still, Izuku would have to start leaving earlier if he wanted to avoid being jumped outside the gates.

As soon as Katsuki was finally out of sight, Izuku let out a breath of relief and walked in the opposite direction, relying on the map he'd memorized to find his way to class 1-F. The school was a little like a maze and Izuku wondered how much of that was intentional. It must make it more difficult for villains to find their way around if they ever got inside, or maybe Nedzu had just remodeled the school this way to get some petty revenge on humans and let them know what running a

maze felt like. Honestly, it was probably both. Eventually, Izuku found the correct hallway and was met with an armful of Mei as soon as he turned the corner.

“Why are our teacher’s so cruel, Izu-kun?!” Mei sobbed into his shoulder.

Izuku’s mind started racing. Were the teachers here going to be like the ones at Aldera? He’d just assumed that they’d be kinder because they were pro-heroes and were supposed to save people, but what if they were just as bad? No, they’d be worse because they had more training.

Before his brain could even fully process those thoughts, Mei started speaking again, “They locked the lab and won’t let us in until the teacher gets here! Why, Izu-kun! I need to make my babies!”

Izuku practically melted in relief. Their teachers weren’t *actually* cruel. It was just Mei being Mei. Not that her outrage didn’t make sense! It just wasn’t as objectively bad as what Izuku had been thinking! The lab being locked might be an inconvenience, but it wouldn’t feel like the end of the world to anyone else besides her.

“Mei, it’s the first day.” Izuku reminded her gently, “And don’t pretend that you wouldn’t just blow something up if you were allowed in right now.”

“It’s part of my *process,* Izu-kun!” Mei insisted. “You can’t have success without a little failure!”

“Maybe so,” Izuku said patiently, “but it still makes sense for them to want to supervise us until they know we can handle ourselves.”

She pouted at that, but relented and pulled him by the wrist to sit on the hallway floor next to a few other kids who must be their future classmates. They’d been staring, something Izuku was sure he’d get more used to the longer he hung out with Mei, but they quickly looked away when they noticed him glancing their way.

Mei pulled out a sketchbook and started sketching out diagrams for her latest invention while Izuku immediately took advantage of the time to analyze their classmates’ quirks, or at least those that were obvious from a glance, which surprisingly wasn’t that many. There were only two students with obvious mutations and the rest looked normal, but Izuku supposed that less obvious mutations, like the crosshairs in Mei’s eyes, might not be easy to see unless he actually

had a conversation with them and had an opportunity to get up close and personal. Of the two with mutation quirks, one had a mutation similar to Gang Orca but with head of a great white shark rather than a killer whale, and the other had large pointed ears and a bald head, though Izuku didn't know if the baldness was quirk related or a stylistic choice. Wait a second, he didn't have eyebrows either, which meant that it was most likely due to his quirk.

"Izu-kun, you're muttering again." Mei said distractedly.

Izuku jolted and realized that the kid with the pointed ears was blushing and the rest of the class was looking at him nervously.

"Oh…" Izuku smiled awkwardly at the kid, "S-sorry. I'm, um, trying to be more aware of when I'm doing that. But I would be interested, if you want to tell me!"

The kid looked like he really didn't, but also didn't know how to say no, "Um...I just have alopecia. I don't think it's linked to my quirk, but it might be, since a couple other people in my family have it too, and we all have similar quirks..."

He trailed off and as much as Izuku wanted to ask what his quirk was, he didn't want their classmates to think he was creepy. Actually, it was probably too late for that, since the rest of the students in the hallway already seemed to be avoiding him and Mei. Still, the kid probably didn't feel comfortable telling Izuku his quirk, so he shouldn't press the issue. It would most likely come up eventually anyway, since most classes shared their name and quirk on the first day, something that he wasn't looking forward to at all. At least he wouldn't lose any friends when it came out that he was quirkless.

"Izu-kun," Mei asked suddenly, "did you see that Kamui Wood's fight yesterday?"

Izuku nodded eagerly, grateful for the distraction "It was against that tortoise villain, right?"

"Yep!" Mei confirmed. "So, what did you think?"

He thought for a moment, "Well, it wasn't a good matchup, at least not with how the two currently fight. Kamui's strengths are speed and capture, so Shell-Shock's natural slowness put him at a huge disadvantage. It could have gone a lot differently though. His shell is hard enough that physical attacks are useless against it, not that that would have helped against Kamui's lacquered chain prison, but if he

had thought to use his shell as a bludgeoning weapon, he probably could have broken out of even that trap fairly easily One of Kamui's major weaknesses is how soft his wood is, since it has to grow so fast."

"Hmm," Mei grinned and wrote something down, "what do you think of turtle-shell armor?"

Izuku grimaced and shook his head, "Too heavy. There's a reason why tortoises are so slow….Turtles, however, can move pretty quickly in water, so the idea might be more practical for a water-combat hero like Selkie."

"And if there are air chambers to help with buoyancy, the armor won't sink even if it's heavy!" Mei brainstormed happily. She scribbled out some of the things she'd already written down and turned to a new page of her sketchbook. .

They spent the rest of their wait discussing various hero fights Izuku had seen that week and discussing how to mimic the strengths or cover their weaknesses of both the heroes and villains. Izuku was vaguely aware of their classmates discretely edging away from them, but he coudln't bring himself to care. Katsuki and their old classmates had already made it wonderfully clear how creepy his notebooks were, but Izuku was at UA to become the best analyst he could be, so he wasn't about to let some judgemental classmates hold him back. He was honestly just lucky that Mei had sat next to him at the exams. He probably still would have met her, since they were in the same class and everything, but he would have been about a thousand times more nervous.

The bell rang right as Powerloader rounded the corner. Mei immediately shoved her sketchbook into Izuku's hands and jumped to her feet, running up to their new homeroom teacher so quickly that she almost ran into him, "Are you gonna open the lab now? Can we get straight to work? When can I start making my babies?"

Powerloader took a step back in shock, but then sighed in resignation, making Izuku giggle softly. He must have gotten a taste of Mei's antics during the invention practical, which must have been a total nightmare because he knew for a fact that Mei had caused at least one explosion during the test. Poor guy.

"Hatsume, please calm down." Powerloader pleaded. "And yes, we'll be going in the room in a few minutes, but I have some things to explain first."

Mei looked like she was about to argue, so Izuku stood up and tugged on her arm, “Come on, just be patient a little longer, ok Mei-chan?”

Mei pouted and plopped down on the floor again, “Ok, but if he takes too long, I’m picking the lock, ok?”

Powerloader already looked done, “It’s an electronic lock. You can’t get in without a passcode.”

“I’ll just have Izu-kun hack it then.”

“It’ll take longer to hack the keypad than to listen to Powerloader.” Izuku turned to their teacher. “I’m sorry about her, she’s just been really looking forward to this.”

“It’s fine.” Powerloader sighed. “Ok, so for the rest of you, thanks for your patience. You all know me from the entrance exam, but I’ll go ahead and introduce myself again anyway. I’m Powerloader, your homeroom teacher, and I am also the head of the support department here at UA. Yes, this includes all three emphases, though design and analysis each have a teacher that has responsibility for those students specifically.”

“Who are they?” A girl with brown curly hair asked.

“Midnight’s in charge of the design track.” Izuku said. He remembered that much from their brief conversation as they were taking him to Nedzu’s office. “As for analysis, I’m not quite sure, but I’m pretty sure it’s Nedzu himself, right?”

“I feel sorry for whoever’s in the analysis track.” The kid with the shark head shivered. “I’ve heard Nedzu’s a total monster.”

Izuku frowned. He hadn’t really talked to Nedzu that much, since he’d been more focused on trying to hack UA, but from their brief interaction, he hadn’t seemed like a monster at all. If anything, he was just looking for some entertainment, since being so intelligent meant he got bored more quickly. He *had* heard that Nedzu could be a little scary, but so far, Izuku didn’t see any reason to be afraid of him.

“Can everyone just shut up so we can get this over with and get into the lab?” Mei complained loudly.

Powerloader cleared his throat, “Um, yes, of course. I’m sure you remember that we asked each of you what tools and materials you wanted, correct? Well, we’ve included those items in your

personalized workstations. When you enter the lab, find the table with the tools you ordered. There's also a nameplate on each desk to make it easier and prevent confusion. We have to go to the opening ceremony in twenty minutes, but that time is yours to get familiar with the space and set up your station the way you like it. You've all already passed the lab safety test, but please be aware that if you are caught engaging in unsafe lab procedures, you *will* receive detention and a ban from the lab until you have demonstrated that you are willing to follow the rules.

Powerloader looked at Mei as he said that last part and Izuku had to hold back a laugh. Mei would never do anything to jeopardize her lab access. She *would,* however, bend the rules as far as they could go and use every loophole to her advantage and Izuku would probably get dragged into helping her. So maybe the entrance exam hadn't been quite long enough for Powerloader to get to know her particular brand of idiosyncrasies after all. Oh well, he'd figure her out eventually.

Powerloader entered the access code and Mei rushed past him the second the door was open while Izuku followed with the rest of the class at a more sedate pace. The lab was large, with about ten large workbenches that acted as desks. Support classes tended to be a little smaller than the average class because of the space and supervision needed, but Izuku didn't mind having fewer classmates. It just meant that there were fewer people to make fun of him.

Mei was already elbows deep in her new tools, practically drooling as she pulled them from their boxes and started testing them out. Izuku simply chuckled and left her to it, since she probably wouldn't hear him if he started talking to her now anyway, and started looking for his own workspace. He had the feeling that most of his classmates were finding their tables primarily based on the unique tools they'd requested, but Izuku hadn't really known what to ask for. He was an analyst, not an inventor, so all he really *needed* was a computer with internet access and maybe some notebooks. He'd said as much in the request forms, but made sure to tell them that he already had his laptop and that he was more than used to buying his own notebooks, so they didn't have to go out of their way for him.

Which meant that Izuku was looking for a mostly empty workbench. He walked around the room, watching as some of his classmates started finding their assigned areas, but every single one of the tables he could see was cluttered with tools and boxes. Maybe they'd just had too much stuff and had put some boxes on his table to keep them off the floor? That'd make sense. It wasn't as though Izuku needed a

lot of space to do his thing anyway, since he was used to doing it running down the street while chasing hero fights. He was just glad to be useful, even if that usefulness was just lending some much-needed table space.

So that meant that he'd have to rely on the little nameplates. He didn't want to bother anyone, so he went over to Mei's table so he knew what the nameplates looked like, since she wouldn't notice him and if she did, she wouldn't care. They were actually really nice, not that he expected anything less than the best from UA, but they each looked like engraved brass and had been screwed onto the table so they wouldn't fall off even if there were a strong breeze or, in Mei's case, an explosion. That was probably smart.

Izuku walked around the room again, checking the nameplates on each of the tables that didn't have someone there already, only to come up empty. Powerloader *had* said Izuku was in class 1-F, hadn't he? Had they changed his assignment at the last minute? What if they'd sent him an email and Izuku had missed it? What if they had just decided that he didn't need a desk? What if they'd decided to not let him into UA after all?

Izuku shook his head and forced himself to take a deep breath. If they had decided to rescind his acceptance, the student ID they'd sent him wouldn't have let him pass the gate this morning. So he was still a student of UA and didn't have to worry about that, but he still had to find his desk. Maybe he should ask Powerloader? But he didn't want to bother him and what if he realized how stupid Izuku was when he realized he couldn't even find his own desk and decided to expel him on the spot? It wouldn't hurt to do one more walk around the room and look at all the nametags again, right? Maybe he'd just missed something, maybe….

"Who the fuck is Izuku Midoirya and why does he need a whole-ass room?"

Izuku whirled around to look at the girl with brown curls, which now that he was thinking about it looked a lot like wire, could that be her quirk? No, he couldn't get distracted by quirks right now! Anyway, she was the one who'd called out and gotten his attention. Actually, she'd gotten the attention of the whole class. Even Mei was looking over at her…wait, did she say *room?*

Izuku practically ran over to where the girl was gesturing to a door that was marked with the same nameplate as each of the desks, and

sure enough, that was his name engraved on the metal. Izuku pushed past the girl, realizing too late that that was probably really rude, and rushed into the room, *his room.* The lights were off, but the room was illuminated by at least five monitors that Izuku could see, one of which was a giant flatscreen that was mounted to the wall above the desk. There was a giant bookshelf against one of the sidewalls that was filled with notebooks and Izuku's fingers twitched as he thought about filling all of them.

He heard a whistle behind him, but couldn't pull his eyes away from the set up as Mei came up to stand beside him, "Wow, Hacker-kun, UA doesn't do anything halfway, do they?"

"Please tell me I'm not dreaming, Mei-chan." Izuku said breathlessly. "I didn't even request any of this!"

"Yeah, sorry about that, Nedzu went a little overboard."

Izuku turned to see Powerloader leaning against the doorframe as the other students either crowded around him or looked in the windows that Izuku hadn't noticed that looked into the rest of the lab. Powerloader was smiling slightly, though it could have been in embarrassment or amusement at Izuku's reaction.

"Everyone, this is Izuku Midoriya, the only first year in the analysis track and Nedzu's personal student." Powerloader introduced. "It's been so long since Nedzu has had an analysis student that he got a little too excited and insisted on designing your workspace himself. This used to be a testing room, there are a few others on either side of you, but this way you won't be distracted by the noise of the lab or worried about lab accidents damaging your computers."

Powerloader shot a pointed look at Mei, who ignored him in favor of grabbing Izuku's arm and jumping up and down, "This is awesome, Izu-kun! Just imagine everything you'll be able to do with all these hacking babies!"

Izuku nodded, then remembered his manners and bowed to Powerloader, "Thank you! I'll do my best to put it to good use!"

Powerloader nodded and smiled as he left. Mei gave his arm a reassuring squeeze before running back out of the room to her own workspace and Izuku noted with relief that he had a clear view of her desk from his windows. He didn't know why that was so reassuring, but it was probably because she was his only friend and he didn't want to feel alone again. The other students each looked at Izuku

curiously before they too turned back to their own workspaces and he hoped that they wouldn’t find him quite as creepy as they had before, now that they had a wall separating them and knew that he was *supposed* to be analyzing everything.

Izuku reverently sat down at the desk and started to familiarize himself with the computers. He had a feeling this was going to be a good year.

Chapter End Notes

> You got a longer chapter this week to make up for the shorter one last time! Actually, it just didn't feel right to try to cut this one into two, so...whatever, just ignore that.
> I try to limit the use of OCs in my fanfiction, but sometimes they are necessary, like in this story since canon doesn't tell us anything about the other support students. The three that were introduced here are actually inspired by background characters from the sports festival arc, though, so there's that. I'll probably draw them eventually and give you a visual when I get around to giving you their names.

Welcome to UA

Chapter Summary

The entrance ceremony and introductions.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The opening ceremonies were...interesting, for lack of a better word. Izuku didn't see Katsuki anywhere, which was honestly a good thing, but it was still kind of worrying. While Izuku wouldn't put it beyond him to just skip the assembly and hang out behind the dumpsters or something, he didn't think Katsuki would pull something like that on the first day! Oh well, if he made a poor first impression, then that wasn't Izuku's problem.

The general muttering of the students died down and Izuku turned to the stage to see Present Mic striding out onto the stage, "Hey, hey hey, everybody! How's everybody doing this morning?"

To Izuku's surprise, Present Mic's enthusiasm was met with a general non-response. He didn't know why, this was Present Mic, the voice hero! He had his own radio show and everything…

"Um, Midoriya?" One of his classmates, the bald one, said softly, "Are you aware that you're mumbling again?"

Izuku slammed his mouth shut and blushed, "S-sorry! I'll, um, I'll try to stop…"

"Ugh, you're all idiots!" The curly haired girl leaned over Mei's lap and shoved a pencil in his face.

Izuku took it hesitantly, not wanting to be rude, "Um, thank you, but ..why?"

She rolled her eyes, "Put it in your mouth. If you start talking, it'll fall out."

Izuku's eyes widened. It was such a simple solution that Izuku didn't know why he hadn't ever thought of it before, "T-thank you so much!"

"Whatever," she settled back into her seat and crossed her arms, "just

use your chew toy so the rest of us can hear the damn assembly."

Izuku nodded frantically and bit down on the pencil as he turned back to the stage. Present Mic, having failed spectacularly at getting a response from the crowd, had apparently just decided to move onto the next order of business, "Well everybody, welcome to UA high, the premier hero school in Japan! To our upperclassmen, welcome back and good luck with your next year of studies. To our brand new first years...Congratulations! Not just anybody can walk these halls, and it takes a lotta hard work and dedication to sit where you're sitting. That being said, don't go getting complacent little listeners! You've each got your own stars that you're reaching for and you're each gonna have to work extra hard, got it? So you're all gonna have to go beyond…."

"PLUS ULTRA!!!"

This time, at least, the students responded exactly how Present Mic wanted, earning a wide smile as he skipped back to the line of chairs across the stage where all the teachers and faculty were sitting, two of which were empty for some reason. Were there more teachers that weren't at the assembly? Or did they set up extra chairs for some other reason?

The next part of the assembly consisted of the faculty all introducing themselves briefly and Izuku dropped the pencil in his mouth twice as he instinctively started to ramble about each hero's quirk. He ended up taking out his own notebook and writing down his observations instead, adding subtle observations that he was only able to notice from up close. He was at UA! He'd be learning from pros! It was still so surreal.

After each of the gathered teachers had gotten the chance to introduce themselves, Present Mic stood again, "Alright, Listeners! Some of you may have noticed a couple empty chairs up here next to us awesome teachers! This is because there are two teachers you all haven't met yet! You upperclassmen know who one of them is, but for the first years, you might be lucky, or unlucky, enough to see our local cryptid in the halls. Aizawa Shouta, pro hero name: Eraserhead, is off hazing his own first year class, so wish them luck. They're gonna need it."

Izuku's eyes widened. The underground hero?! He couldn't beat All Might as Izuku's favorite hero, because *All Might,* but he was a close second. He fought practically quirkless and could take away other people's quirks at will! And he was a teacher here? What did Present

Mic mean by hazing? Was that where Katsuki was?

Izuku felt a brief surge of jealous anger. Katsuki got to learn from one of Izuku's favorite teachers? He wouldn't even appreciate the nuances of Eraserhead's fighting style! Unbidden, an image of Katsuki getting his explosions erased as he was tangled in Eraserhead's capture weapon came to his mind and Izuku snickered quietly. Ok, so maybe Katsuki learning from one of his favorite heroes wouldn't be *all* bad…

"But that still leaves one more teacher that you listeners haven't met yet!" Present Mic continued. "He's a special new addition to our staff this year! You first year hero students will be in for a real treat because here he is, the number one hero, the symbol of peace, and the newest member of our staff...All Might!"

Izuku's jaw dropped and he knew he wasn't the only one as a booming laugh echoed around the auditorium and the number one hero himself strode out from behind the curtain, "I am here...to help mould the next generation of heroes!"

The auditorium exploded in applause and Izuku added to it wholeheartedly. He was going to be in the same building as *All Might!* This must be why he was in town! But...how was he going to teach classes if he only had three hours in his hero form? Did he still have three hours? Or had saving Kacchan from the sludge villain cut down on that time? What were the repercussions of him going over his limit?

There was a clatter as the pencil dropped to his lap again, and Izuku hurriedly put it back in his mouth so he wouldn't mutter. Thankfully, no one could have heard him over the applause, but it would still be better to think about that when he was alone...maybe he could come up with some way to counteract or even just minimize the effects of his injury....or maybe Mei could come up with some sort of illusion tech so he wouldn't have to use his hero time to teach? But that would involve telling her about All Might's other form and he couldn't betray the hero's trust like that…

Later. He could think about that later. For now, though, All Might had taken a seat in one of the empty chairs that was almost ridiculously too small for him and Nedzu was climbing a small set of steps up the side of the podium, "Hello students! Am I a mouse? A dog? A bear? What's important is that I'm the principal! UA has a spectacular legacy and…"

Nedzu began to talk about the history of the school and Izuku was on the edge of his seat as he listened...for the first ten minutes. Mei had lost interest after three and began to sketch out invention ideas again. Izuku really tried to pay attention. This man was going to be his teacher! He couldn't just tune him out! His classmates seemed just as bored as he was and eventually Izuku decided that he could probably just apologize if he needed to and turned to fleshing out his analyses of the staff. Occasionally, Mei would poke his arm and point to a particular diagram, asking an unspoken question and he would think for a moment before writing something beside her drawing. It went like that for another fifteen minutes before Nedzu finally stopped talking.

"Ah, but I'm getting carried away!" Nedzu clapped his paws together, waking up a few of the students that had fallen asleep during his speech. "You all have bright futures ahead of you and we are so excited to help you cultivate that light. So, as the principal of UA, congratulations and welcome to UA high school!"

There was a hesitant round of applause that got louder as Nedzu descended the steps and the teachers all left the stage to go retrieve their classes. Within a few minutes, Powerloader was leading them back to the classroom. As they were walking back, the kid in their class with the shark quirk placed his hand on Izuku's shoulder and patted it consolingly, "I'm sorry, Midoirya. I don't know how you're gonna survive being Nedzu's personal student if he's really that long winded all the time."

"He wasn't that way during the entrance exam." Izuku tried. "But maybe that was just because he didn't want to distract me as I was hacking UA."

He ended up running into the girl walking from front of him as his classmates stopped walking in shock, "You hacked UA during the entrance exam?! What the fuck?"

"I didn't get very far!" Izuku defended, waving his hand in front of him nervously, "I think they just wanted to see how I approached unsolvable problems, that's it!"

"Yeah," Mei said, "and I'm sure it didn't hurt that you'd already gotten a head start before the exam even started."

Izuku turned to her in betrayal, "Mei!"

Their classmates kept their distance from the two for the rest of the

way back to the lab. When they got there, everyone sat down at their tables and Izuku went back to his room, noticing for the first time that there was a small school desk that had been placed outside the door, probably for when the class had a lecture instead of lab time. Before he could decide if he was supposed to go into his room or sit at the desk though, Powerloader cleared his throat to get their attention.

“We have about twenty minutes until class officially ends.” He said. “So, why don’t each of you introduce yourselves? I know that the support course has a lot more individual work than the business course or the hero course, but it will still be helpful to get to know your classmates. Who wants to go first?”

The kid with the shark quirk shrugged and stood up, “What’dya wanna know?”

“Just say your name and quirk, dumbass.” The curly haired girl griped.

Izuku felt his stomach sink. Yeah, he knew it was coming, but it still would have been nice if he didn’t have to reveal his quirklessness right off the bad. Oh well, they already thought he was creepy, now there’d just be pity mixed in.

“Also include why you chose support.” Powerloader added. “It’ll be helpful to know each other’s motivations.”

“Alright.” The kid with the shark quirk shrugged again. “I’m Ryou Hanzou. My quirk’s Great White, and I wanna make waterproof tech. My quirk lets me do anything a shark can do, which means I can breathe underwater, so I spent a lot of time swimming as a kid, and would have totally spent weeks at a time in the ocean, but my phone and video games wouldn’t work, so I’m gonna fix that.”

Izuku had never realized that would be an inconvenience to people with amphibious quirks, but he supposed that it made sense. Most technology was made to be used by people in air, and even most waterproof technology had a limit of either time or depth. Hanzou would definitely have a niche as an inventor if he could figure out how to move past those limitations.

The class’s eyes turned to the bald kid with pointed ears, who was sitting next to Hanzou, “Oh, I’m next? Ok, um, my name is Shin Shiguro and my quirk is called Goblin. I, uh, instinctively know the location of any non-living object I’ve ever touched. The accuracy goes down with time though, so if I haven't touched something for ten

years, I'd be able to tell you the city it's in, but not any more specific than that. I, uh, just like building things."

He sat down almost before he'd finished speaking and the class turned to the next student, which was the girl with curly hair.

"I'm Akane Kohaku and this mess," the girl gestured to her curls, which rattled slightly as they caught the light, "is my quirk. It's called Copper Wire and it's a total pain to cut. Yes, it conducts electricity, yes, I use it in my inventions, no, you can't touch it. Got it?"

The introductions continued like that for the rest of the class until it got to Mei, "Hi! Mei Hatsume, future CEO of Hatsume Industries! My quirk is Zoom and it lets me see up to five kilometers away! My babies are gonna change the world!"

Izuku chucked quietly as he noticed their classmates instinctively lean back from Mei's enthusiasm. He was finally getting used to it himself, but it was still funny to see how other people reacted to her. Izuku noticed that the class was looking at him and he froze as he realized he was next. In fact, he was the last student to introduce himself. Hesitantly, he stood up.

"Um, I'm Izuku Midoirya. I like analyzing heroes and quirks, so I want to be a support analyst and help heroes work smarter and be better." Izuku glanced at the clock. Class should be ending any second now. He could do this. Just bite the bullet. "And I'm quirkless."

The bell rang.

Chapter End Notes

Here's a picture of the OCs I added to class 1-F.

People

Chapter Summary

Izuku has some...interesting chats.

Chapter Notes

First off, here's some cute fanart of Izuku from Dead in a Ditch. Also, I am on vacation for the next week or so, and as such, I just wanted to let you know that if I update a little later than I normally do, I'm not dead. I'm just probably busy picking blackberries.

Izuku grabbed his bag and bolted as soon as he heard the bell. A small part of him knew that his classmates might not reject him right off the bat, this *was* UA after all, but the larger part of him knew that wasn't very likely. These kids were still human, which meant that they would still see him as weak and defenseless now that they knew he didn't have a quirk, just like Katsuki had.

He hadn't even noticed Mei chasing after him until she grabbed him by his arm and spun him around to face her, "Izuku Hacker Midoriya, just what do you think you're doing?"

"Breaking out the middle name? This must be serious." Izuku chuckled nervously. "You do realize I might have a real middle name, right?"

"It's too late to change it now, Izu-kun, your middle name is Hacker." Mei dismissed. "Now, why'd you run away like that?"

"Why do you think?" Izuku couldn't help snapping, but then forced himself to take a deep breath. He wasn't used to letting himself feel frustrated about things like this, but that still wasn't any reason to take things out on Mei. "I...I'm sorry, Mei-chan, but believe me, it's better if I can just avoid...everything that was about to happen. People don't tend to react *kindly* when they learn I'm quirkless."

"You have to give people a chance to be good, Izu-kun!" Mei stomped her foot. "You can't just run away because you assume people are going to hate you! What if I hadn't forced you to listen after you told me? Would you have run away then too?"

“Yes!” Izuku was only able to hold himself back from yelling because he remembered they were still in the hallway. “Look, you’re the exception. All my life, the second anyone has learned that I was *less evolved,* they’ve turned on me. Everyone. Even my own mother started seeing me differently. I’m *tired,* Mei-chan. I don’t…Ugh! I just didn’t think I wanted to deal with that today, ok?”

Mei looked as shocked as Izuku felt at his outburst. He hadn’t really realized that all that was bubbling under the surface when he ran away from his classmates. He’d just thought he was...scared? He didn’t know, but now that he was thinking about it, he realized that his frustrated self was probably more honest than he was used to being with himself. He *was* tired. Sick and tired of the constant betrayal that came with people abandoning him. He didn’t want to do it anymore.

“Izuku…” Mei’s expression shifted from something almost like pity to a determined glare and he had to take a step back as she grabbed his arm and started dragging him back toward the classroom. “No. I’m not gonna let my best friend run away from potential allies just because he’s scared of a little rejection! Any good inventor knows that you can’t let a few explosions drive you from the lab!”

“I’m not an inventor!” Izuku dug his heels in and tried to yank his arm back, but Mei had years worth of muscle from hauling around tools and materials, so all he did was slow her down. “I’m an analyst. I use past data to make predictions! And all my data is pointing to this *not* being a good idea!”

“Your data set is skewed.” Mei countered. “Now get back there and make friends!”

“No!”

They were so busy with their modified game of tug-of-war that neither of them noticed Nedzu hanging upside-down from the ceiling until they were right in front of him, “Hello!”

Izuku yelped and Mei stumbled backward. Without her actively pulling against him, Izuku’s own momentum was too much and he fell to the floor, pulling Mei down on top of him. His face grew hot as he realized that not only had the principal of UA, and supposedly his new personal mentor, caught him in the middle of a childish fight, but then Izuku had to make things worse by literally tripping over his own feet. Couldn’t he catch a break?

“Oh dear!” Nedzu smiled pleasantly. “Well, this seems to be quite the

predicament!"

Mei didn't waste any time untangling herself from Izuku, who groaned as she accidentally slapped him in her haste to get to her feet. Well, it was *probably* accidental, but really, who knew when it came to her? Either way, within seconds she had scrambled to her feet and started shaking Nedzu's paw enthusiastically.

"I'm Mei Hatsume, future CEO of Hatsume Industries!" She grinned. "And you're Principal Nedzu."

Izuku hid his face in his hands, silently screaming in embarrassment, but Nedzu didn't seem phased by Mei's behavior at all as he simply chuckled, "That I am! And I know who you are, Miss Hatsume. I saw your entry for the entrance exam and I must say that I am very excited to see what you'll do here at UA. Do you mind if I steal young Midoriya from you for a moment? I'll return him by tomorrow."

Before Izuku could protest being referred to as an object, Mei grinned, "Of course!"

She grabbed his arm and yanked him roughly to his feet. Nedzu was no help and simply grinned knowingly as Izuku was manhandled by his best friend. Mei shoved him forward, effectively handing him off to the principal, "See if you can get him to stop being an idiot while you're at it!"

Nedzu laughed, "I will do my best Miss Hatsume!"

"You'll have your work cut out for you. He's too stubborn for his own good." She turned on her heel and waved as she started walking away, "Good luck, Izu-kun! See you tomorrow!"

Izuku gulped and turned back to the principal, "Um...hi?"

Nedzu simply smiled, seemingly unbothered by his awkwardness as he started leading Izuku down the hall, "Hello! How was your first day? Did everything go well?"

Izuku nodded, pushing the whole situation with his *quirk introduction* out of his mind, "It was really good. I, uh, heard that you had a hand in setting up my workstation, so...thank you?"

"Oh!" Nedzu's smile grew a little more excited. "Was everything to your liking? The moment I saw your request form, I thought, *this simply won't do at all!* You can't learn without the right materials, after

all!"

"It just seems like a little much." Izuku said softly. "You really didn't need to go to so much trouble for me, I'm sorry."

Nedzu waved his paw dismissively, "Not at all! In fact, it was rather fun, so you were doing me a favor."

Izuku hadn't thought of it that way, but he supposed that Powerloader *had* said that Nedzu had enjoyed setting up his little room, "Oh, then you're welcome, I guess."

They had arrived at a door that Izuku recognized from his entrance exam as the principal's office. Nedzu opened the door and gestured for Izuku to go in, "Tea?"

"Y-yes, please…"

Nedzu grabbed a kettle from the side table and poured hot water into two cups, putting the tea bags in before setting them on the desk and inviting Izuku to sit down, "Now, I'm sure you're eager to get home, and you're most likely wondering what this is all about, correct?"

Izuku nodded hesitantly, "Just a little, though I'm pretty sure you wanted to talk about my analysis lessons, right? Powerloader said something about me being your personal student, so…"

"That is partially correct!" Nedzu took a sip of tea. "I *do* want to talk to you about that. However, there is something else. Powerloader mentioned that the support students work on projects over the course of the semester, correct?"

"He said something about that in my acceptance letter." Izuku confirmed. "But he hasn't said anything else about it."

"Ah, well Midoriya, each first year support student chooses a project to work on every semester and most of your grade is based on your adequate completion of it. Most students in your class will be working on an invention, but I have something a little different in mind for you if you find it agreeable."

Izuku nodded and took a sip of his tea as he waited for Nedzu to continue. Was he supposed to say something? But he didn't want to interrupt the principal of UA! Thankfully, Nedzu took his nod as answer enough and continued talking before Izuku could work himself into a full anxiety attack wondering how he was supposed to act

around such a smart and important person. Well, not *person,* but...authority figure? Izuku hadn't really had many positive experiences with those.

"I would like you to make a full analysis of the first year hero students' quirks." Nedzu said. "They are still young and lack training, so they have a lot of room for improvement. You should focus your analysis on how they can play to their strengths while hopefully minimizing their weaknesses. These will be given to the students for them to use, so you'll be able to see the difference your skills can really make. Is that acceptable?"

"Yes!" Izuku sunk back in his chair sheepishly, "Um, I mean, yes, that sounds like it will be a good project."

"It's not bad to be excited." Nedzu chuckled, making Izuku blush. "In fact, that enthusiasm is probably a large part of why your analysis is so advanced at such a young age. I wouldn't have chosen this project if I didn't believe that you would enjoy it."

"Thank you." Izuku wrung his hands together anxiously, "But, um, I don't think my analysis is really that advanced yet. I still have a long way to go."

"But of course!" Nedzu smiled. "This *is* a school, afterall. But that brings me to the next part of our chat. You do realize, of course, that as an analyst, you will often have access to sensitive information, whether this is given to you so that you can do your job or whether it is something like a hero's weaknesses that you figured out yourself, correct?"

Izuku nodded, wondering where he was going with this.

"Well, I was planning on giving you full access to the school's camera system so you can easily observe the first years wherever they happen to be." Nedzu said. "But, if you are observing correctly, you might become privy to certain...circumstances, when it comes to one of our faculty. This information cannot be allowed to get out, you understand."

Izuku nodded anxiously. Was he really being entrusted with big secrets on his first day? What if he somehow messed it up? What if he accidentally posted something that exposed the secret and then the staff would hate him and he'd get kicked out of UA and blacklisted from all the other schools and…

A knock on the door startled Izuku out of his spiraling thought. Nedzu jumped down from his chair to open the door, “And here he is now! Welcome, All Might! Come inside!”

Izuku practically deflated in relief as he saw All Might in his skinny form hesitantly walk in the door, “Oh, you were just talking about All Might’s other form! I already knew about that, so you don’t have anything to worry about.”

Nedzu grinned manically and All Might did a double take and spit up a few drops of blood as he saw Izuku sitting at the desk, “Uh, Nedzu...that’s a student.”

“Yes, that’s Izuku Midoriya, my personal student.” Nedzu said, almost proudly, if that was even possible. “I thought it would be best to tell him about your injury before he saw you change forms on the cameras, but it seems I had nothing to worry about.”

“But...uh…” All Might opened and closed his mouth nervously a few times, “...how?!”

“You…” Izuku’s stomach dropped slightly, “You don’t remember me?”

All Might looked between Izuku and Nedzu, confused and a wave of disappointment washed over him. He didn’t know why he expected All Might to remember him, but for some reason he’d assumed he would. That short conversation had completely derailed his life and knocked him forcefully onto a new path, so it just seemed so important to Izuku, but to All Might, it was just another conversation with a fan. Of course he didn’t remember every fan he’d talked to! Remembering one person would be completely unreasonable!

Izuku forced a smile onto his face, burying his disappointment in logic, “It was almost a year ago, so it’s ok that you don’t remember! I, uh, asked you if I could be a hero and you encouraged me to choose a more realistic path.” He chuckled awkwardly. “I did! I, uh, still want to help people, but decided it would be safer if I did that from behind a computer, you know?”

“Oh…” All Might still looked confused, but after a moment, there was a flash of recognition, “You were that quirkless boy.”

Izuku smiled and shrugged, “I’m going to be an analyst. If you’d never saved my life that day and taken the time to talk to me, I would probably still be chasing an impossible dream. I’m a lot happier now, though, so, uh, thank you.”

All Might shuffled awkwardly, glancing to Nedzu, who was watching the scene with an unreadable expression, “I’m, uh, glad I could help.”

Izuku nodded and turned back to Nedzu, “Well, I’ve known for a while now and haven’t told anyone yet, so was that all you wanted to talk to me about.”

“For now.” Nedzu confirmed. “Anything else can wait. Now, shouldn’t you be getting home?”

“Yes!” Izuku bowed to them and grabbed his backpack before running to the door. “Thanks!”

All Might hesitantly started edging for the door as well, “I, uh, should probably be heading out as well…”

Izuku was already on his way out, but he could’ve sworn there was a slight chill in Nedzu’s voice as he closed the door, “Actually, All Might, why don’t you stay for a cup of tea? I believe we need to have a little chat.”

Risk and Reward

Chapter Summary

> Izuku sees his classmates again...but this time they know he's quirkless.

Chapter Notes

> Here's some amazing fanart from Whirl.
> Also, I'm starting a new job, so there's a good chance that my update schedule will be up in the air for a few weeks until I get settled into a new routine. I'll still try to get chapters out frequently, but we'll see how things go. Thanks for being understanding!

Izuku intentionally left later than he should have for school so that he wouldn't have to deal with his classmates which was worth the risk of running into Katsuki on the train. He honestly wasn't planning on being as late as he was, but when he reached the station, he caught sight of Katsuki already waiting for the train. Luckily, he was facing the other way so he hadn't seen Izuku yet and he was able to hide around the corner until the train left. It meant that Izuku had to wait for the next train, but he wouldn't have to deal with an angry Katsuki, so it was all good.

As it was, Izuku ended up sliding into the little desk outside his workroom right as the bell rang. Mei was sending him the stink eye, but he resolutely ignored her as Powerloader walked to the front of the room. He knew she was just trying to do what she thought was best for him, but she'd never had to deal with being quirkless before.

"Alright class, settle down." Powerloader said. "Welcome to the support course! Today, you're going to be deciding on and starting your semester projects. These have to be approved by me, and I'll also be looking over them as you work to evaluate your progress and help you improve. I would personally recommend choosing a project that you would be able to use in the sports festival, since you're allowed to bring any support items you want, as long as you made them yourself. It's still a ways away, but it can sneak up on you if you're not careful."

Izuku thought back to the project that the principal had given him. It wasn't an invention, but knowing all the first year hero students' quirks would give him an edge that nobody else would have, so

maybe that was why Nedzu assigned him to analyze their quirks. He should try to give each of the students a few suggestions before the sports festival as well, to help them do well. He glanced over at Mei, who was already messing with the materials on her desk in excitement. Choosing just one project would be difficult for her.

Powerloader called his attention back to the front of the room, “You are also allowed to work on other projects for extra credit, if you want. These have to be approved by me just the same as if they were official projects, they just don’t have to go as in depth. I will be right up here if you have any questions or want to get your project approved, so don’t hesitate to ask.”

With that, he sat back down and left them to their work. Izuku immediately bolted into his room so Mei couldn’t try to force him to make friends and closed the door behind him with a sigh. Immediately, his attention was grabbed by a non-descript post-it note stuck to the central screen of his computer. Izuku approached it hesitantly, fully expecting some hatred-filled death threat. It wouldn’t be the first time, though his desk this morning had been notably clear of graffiti, which was a pleasant surprise. Though maybe Mei had just scared them out of doing something that obvious. Izuku hadn’t ever had someone who was willing to protect him like that before.

Izuku didn’t even notice himself clenching his eyes shut as he sntached the note off the screen and had to force himself to take a peek, only for his eyes to widen in shock and relief as he realized that the note was actually from Nedzu, not his classmates.

Midoriya,

Here’s the password to the camera systems!

Ra+_0verlord

Burn this note.

Nedzu

;)

Izuku read it twice until he was sure that he would be able to remember the password before looking around. Did his room have matches? He checked all the drawers and found every office supply he never knew he needed, but nothing that would allow him to burn the note as instructed. He couldn’t just tear it up! Someone could

potentially reassemble it and gain access to the cameras and it would all be Izuku's fault and then…

His spiral stopped when he happened to glance out his window and notice Mei hard at work. She made so many things explode that she had to have something capable of burning a tiny piece of paper...right?

But if he asked for her help, she might force him to confront their classmates, unless, of course, she was so distracted with her inventing that she completely forgot about her self-declared side quest. Izuku bit his lip and watched her for another long moment before deciding that it was a safe enough bet.

The noise hit him immediately as soon as he opened the door. Almost everyone was working on something and the happy sounds of drills and power tools seemed to come from every direction as he walked toward Mei's table.

"Mei-chan, Nedzu gave me this note and asked me to burn it. Do you have something that'd be able to take care of it?"

Mei whipped her head around to face him and he leaned back as the crosshairs in her eyes narrowed before she gave him a manic grin, "Oooh! A note-burning baby? I can make one!"

She reached for the note, but Izuku held it out of her reach, "Actually, Mei-chan, I was hoping for something a little faster."

Mei pouted, "You're no fun, Izu-kun."

"Nope." Izuku agreed, "Now, are you gonna help me, or not?"

Mei glared at him for another moment before sighing and turning on her blowtorch. Izuku smiled brightly at her as he lit the corner of the note on fire and let it burn for a few seconds before dropping it onto the floor and stomping out the flames once the note had completely turned to ash. Their classmates seemed to be giving them a wide berth as they watched the exchange, but that was just fine by him.

"Thanks, Mei-chan! Good luck on your project!" Izuku started to walk back to his room, but was stopped in his tracks by Mei grabbing his arm.

"Oh no you don't." Mei's grip tightened slightly as she grinned savagely. "Izuku Hacker Midoriya, you are going to talk to your

classmates if it kills you!”

Izuku was honestly convinced that it might, “You’re my *friend,* Mei! Shouldn’t you be trying to keep me alive?”

“Oh, shut up, you’re not gonna die.” Mei waved the hand that wasn’t holding Izuku hostage dismissively. “Now, everybody, listen up! This idiot think that you’re all gonna hate him just because he was born with an extra toe-joint or whatever, so he needs you to beat it through his thick skull that not everybody is like his old stupid bullies!”

Izuku hid his face in his hands and groaned as it turned red. It wasn’t a safe bet. Well, at least he’d successfully burned the note and he could deal with all of his classmates' rejections at once. Small mercies, right?

He prepared himself for the worst when he heard Kohaku scoff, “You’re fucking kidding, right?” Izuku uncovered his face to find her looking *extremely* unimpressed, “If we’re gonna hate you, it’ll be because of something you *did,* loser.”

Izuku blinked a few times and flinched as someone patted his shoulder heavily. He looked up to see Hanzou grinning at him, something that was *really* intimidating, considering his three rows of sharp teeth, “Yeah, dude, rejecting someone based on a quirk is totally uncool.”

Izuku’s eyes widened and he glanced over the rest of the class, looking for any sign that they disagreed with what the other two had said. Most of his classmates just looked like they didn’t care either way, which hadn’t ever happened before, and the only one who didn’t look bored with the whole thing was Shiguro, who was currently trembling, “Um...being quirkless doesn’t make you any less terrifying, Midoriya.”

Mei gave a shocked laugh and Izuku’s jaw dropped, “I, uh...what? I’m not that scary, am I?”

Kohaku rolled her eyes, “Yeah, and my hair’s not a pain to brush. You caught the attention of Principal Nedzu, Midoriya. Of course you’re scary!”

Powerloader cleared his throat and the class all turned to him, “Midoriya, UA has a zero tolerance policy toward bullying and discrimination. You shouldn’t have to worry about that, and if anyone gives you a hard time because of your quirk, you are more than welcome to report that to me or to Nedzu.”

“And I won’t get in trouble?” Izuku asked, now reeling from shock. This all seemed like a dream. A good dream! But still a dream.

He clamped his mouth shut when he noticed the heavy silence that had blanketed the room in a stark contrast to the happy sounds of working that had greeted him when he’d first left his room. His classmates were staring at him with various expressions of disbelief, shock, and even anger.

“You used to get in trouble for reporting discrimination?!” Kahaku asked. “What the fuck?!”

“Well, it’s just that every school has a zero bullying policy,” Izuku hurried to explain, “but most teachers tend to think that it’s not a big deal. Or, not big enough to get a promising student in trouble for, but then something has to be done about the complaint and someone has to be punished, so…yeah.”

“You don’t have to worry about that anymore.” Powerloader said firmly. “We actually *follow* our policies here. We couldn’t call ourselves heroes if we didn’t even protect our students from each other.”

“Thank you so much, goodbye!” Izuku held hurriedly and rushed back into his room and slammed the door, wiping at his eyes furiously the moment he was out of sight. They really wouldn’t let him get bullied? It just seemed so surreal! He couldn’t resist the urge to pinch his arm to make sure that he hadn’t just overslept somehow, but even though he pinched his arm hard enough to make the skin turn red, he was still at UA, staring at his private room with a setup of computers that the principal had personally set up. This was really real.

After a minute or so, Izuku took a deep breath to steady himself and sat down at his computer. If UA was going to do so much to help him, the least he could do was become an analyst they could be proud of, starting with his assignment from Nedzu.

Analyzing the hero course first years.

Discovery

Chapter Summary

Izuku finds an...opportunity.

Once Izuku gained access to the system, he spent some time familiarizing himself with the system, making sure he knew how to pan between the different cameras and could figure out which cameras covered which areas of campus. Once he was comfortable with that, he grabbed an empty notebook from the shelf and started debating the best way to start his project. The only problem was that the first years...hadn't really done anything yet. Yesterday had just been the entrance ceremony and Eraserhead hazing his class, whatever that meant, but they wouldn't start combat exercises until that afternoon at the very least, so what was he supposed to do until then?

Izuku thought for a moment before looking through the archives to see if he could find the entrance exam. Whatever it had consisted of, it was apparently a good enough demonstration of each student's quirk and combat ability to determine their qualification for the hero course, so if it was good enough for UA, it should be good enough for him. It was somewhere to start, at least.

Thankfully, Izuku found the footage he needed quickly, along with a list of the examinees by area. On instinct, he scanned until he found Katsuki's name. Testing area C. Izuku bit his lip. He didn't actually need to see Katsuki's exam, he knew his quirk well enough from a lifetime of experience to be able to analyze it in his sleep, but a part of him needed to know if Katsuki really was as strong as he'd always bragged.

Before he could second guess himself, Izuku opened the footage from Katsuki's area. The minute that people started moving, Katsuki blasted ahead of the other examinees and went to town, leaving a trail of robot parts in his wake. Izuku felt a surge of anger, couldn't he at least leave some of the robots for other people? No, that would require him thinking about other people for once in his life, wouldn't it?

As he watched Katsuki destroy robot after robot, Izuku couldn't help but feel grateful that he hadn't tried for the hero course. As much as he hated to admit it, he really wouldn't have stood a chance against robots like that. They weren't the kind of opponents that he would

have been able to beat simply by analyzing them. He wouldn't have gotten a single point.

Katsuki, however, didn't even blink as he destroyed robots left and right. The main issue that Izuku could see was his recklessness. True to form, Katsuki treated the other examinees like extras that weren't even there, resulting in several instances where someone could have been injured from either his explosions or the shrapnel and debris that went flying with the destruction of each robot. Izuku watched as Katsuki let loose a giant explosion less than a foot from another examinee's face, effectively stealing the three pointer that he'd been about to destroy. The other examinees that he'd done something like that to had shrugged it off and found another robot far away from Katsuki's attack radius. This one, however, some kid with purple hair that seemed to defy gravity, got angry. Izuku grimaced, knowing what was about to happen as the kid yelled at Katsuki, who wasn't going to let an insult like that stand.

To his surprise, however, Katsuki turned around and walked away, allowing the purple-haired kid to finish off the three-pointer that had been injured by Katsuki's attack. That couldn't be right. Katsuki would never have backed down like that even if All Might himself had been yelling at him, much less some extra that he didn't even know, so what had that kid said to get him to just...drop it?

"Is there audio on these cameras?" Izuku muttered to himself, looking at the files more closely. Even if there was, the noise from the fight would probably have drowned out the conversation, but Izuku had to try anyway. He had to know what that kid said.

As it turned out, the cameras *did* have audio, but when Izuku listened to the camera he'd been watching, all he could hear was metallic clanging and explosions as the students raced to destroy the robots. He almost gave up, but then he realized that for an exam like this, Nedzu probably would have gone through extra trouble to make sure that there weren't any blindspots. That meant that there might actually be a camera closer to where the two were fighting, just pointed in the wrong direction so that it had a different field of vision. Within a few minutes, Izuku had found a camera that was almost directly above the fight he wanted to listen to.

When he first opened the audio, he was worried that he still wouldn't be able to hear anything above the noise of the fight, but after a few seconds, he heard Katsuki's familiar voice. He could barely make it out above the din of combat, but Izuku could still understand what he

was saying if he concentrated. He rewound the audio a few seconds until there was the sound of a loud explosion, most likely when Katsuki attacked the robot, and then a voice he didn't recognize started yelling.

"You almost killed me!" That must be the purple-haired kid. "What do you think you're doing?"

Katsuki's answer was more like a growl, "Get out of my way, extra!"

"Forget about me and go find yourself another robot."

Izuku waited to hear Katsuki's response, but it didn't come. Izuku looked at the time signature on the audio and did a double take when he realized that Katsuki had already stormed off to find another robot. He just...told him to go away and he actually did? That didn't sound like Katsuki at all!

Izuku facepalmed and laughed as he made the connection. He was an idiot, it must be the kid's quirk! There was no other way that Katsuki would have obeyed him. But what was his quirk? It would probably be in his file, assuming that Izuku had access to it. He navigated back to where the student files should be and entered his password, which actually worked! Information like the students' phone numbers and addresses were blocked out, but Izuku suspected that Nedzu intended that as a mental exercise more than anything else. He didn't need any of that right now, though, he needed quirks.

He cross referenced the list of examinees in area c with the hero course students, only to come up empty. Confused, because someone who could get Katsuki to obey him was obviously extremely strong, Izuku widened his search to all first year students.

Hitoshi Shinso. Quirk: Brainwashing. The three pointer Izuku had seen him take out was about half his points, since his quirk wasn't naturally destructive, so he didn't have nearly enough points to get into the hero course, which Izuku honestly thought was a crime. Yeah, Shinso couldn't compete with kids like Katsuki when it came to destroying robots, but his quirk would be so useful for hostage situations and overpowered villains that couldn't be beaten head on! And his quirk most likely had a lot of room to grow, since he could obviously modify memories with a simple command. Katsuki would have turned right around to explode him the minute Shinso released his hold if he hadn't been commanded to forget about him. And since he could do that, there was a chance that he could train to be able to give more

complicated commands and maybe interrogations, even though his file said he couldn't give any commands that required higher brain function. Yet.

Izuku grabbed the notebook he'd ended up scribbling his thoughts in, tearing out the first page that had the beginning of Katsuki's analysis on it, and headed out to the lab again. The other students were all busy at work again, though Mei did look up when she noticed him, probably expecting him to come over and talk to her. He could drop by her table on his way back, but that wasn't his goal right now.

He gripped his notebook a little tighter as he approached Powerloader's desk. Izuku felt bad about interrupting whatever their teacher was working on, but Powerloader *had* said that he was here to answer any questions they had about projects and said he wouldn't get in trouble for reporting bullying, so he probably wouldn't get in trouble for interrupting him either. Wait...maybe he was supposed to go through Nedzu instead because he was an analysis student?

"Izu-kun!" Mei's voice in his ear made his jump and he looked over to see her grinning at him. "What are you working on? Do you have a project you need approved? Are you gonna make super cool analysis babies?"

Well, it was too late to go back into his room because Mei had already caught Powerloader's attention and he was now looking right at them. Izuku took a deep breath and reminded himself that teachers were supposed to help their students, and Powerloader wasn't like his old teachers, so he wasn't going to get mad. Probably.

"You said we could do extra credit projects, right?"

"Yep." Powerloader leaned forward attentively, "Do you have one in mind?"

Izuku nodded and opened his notebook, "Shinso Hitoshi. He's a gen-ed student with a brainwashing quirk, but he originally applied to the hero course. I'd like to see if I can use my analysis to help him improve enough to get into the hero course at the sports festival."

"That's a pretty tall order." Powerloader said. "Do you know how rare it is for someone from another course to actually succeed in transferring that way?"

"The last one was Eraserhead when he was a student here." Izuku said confidently. "But Shinso has what it takes! His quirk is powerful, it's

just not any good against robots. Plus, this will be a good way to test if my analyses are useful! If I can help Shinso improve, then I'll know that my notes are actually helpful!"

"Hmm," Powerloader thought for a minute, "As long as you won't get too discouraged if he doesn't end up transferring, then I don't see any problem with it."

"Ooh! Izu-kun, you said he's got a brainwashing quirk?" Mei grinned manically. "I could make so many babies for him! Powerloader! If I make some babies, could he use them in the sports festival?"

"He's a gen-ed student?" Powerloader asked. "He should be able to bring a single support item, but it'll need to be approved by Nedzu in advance."

"Good enough for me! We're adopting him!" Mei declared.

Powerloader just sighed, "Adopting him?"

"Yep!" Mei smiled. "Izu-kun and I are adopting him as our extra credit project! Let me read your notes!"

Mei grabbed his notebook and started reading while Powerloader looked at Izuku, who smiled and shrugged, "Hey, at least she didn't try to call Shinso one of her babies."

Mei hummed and turned a page, "Where did you even find Extra-Credit-kun, anyway, Izu-kun?"

Izuku couldn't hold back a grin as he started walking back toward his room, "He yelled at my ex-bully during the entrance exam."

Mei cackled.

Petty

Chapter Summary

Izuku thinks about Katsuki

Chapter Notes

Sorry again for the inconsistent updates, but my new job is going really well!

Izuku frowned in frustration as he turned off his computer and gathered his things in preparation to go to their core classes. He'd spent most of the afternoon watching class 1A through the cameras as they did some sort of indoor combat exercise that All Might had put together and it was...frustrating. Don't get him wrong, it was amazing to see all of the students' amazing quirks in action! It was just so frustrating to see them acting so far beneath their potential! Like that kid with the electricity quirk who fried his brain within seconds of the exercise starting or the kid with the hot and cold quirk who didn't even use his heated side until the exercise was already over! They could do so much *more!* They could save so many people, if they could just think a little more creatively.

And then there was Katsuki. He had everything. He had an amazing quirk, good battle sense, and even some of the techniques Izuku had suggested before Katsuki had started bullying him. He really did have the potential to be an amazing hero, maybe even the best, if he wasn't so violent.

He hardly noticed Mei start rambling to him as soon as he sat down in the desk outside his workroom to wait for the teacher to arrive until she slammed her hands down and leaned down until she was nose to nose with him, "Ok, what's up?"

Izuku leaned back slightly and stuttered, "W-what?"

Mei rolled her eyes and leaned forward even more so that Izuku was forced to lean all the way back in his seat until his head was touching the wall behind him, "You're dragging your feet. Didn't you get to watch the hero course fight today? I wasn't even expecting to be able to get a word in edgewise, but here you are giving one word answers!"

"...oh." Izuku shrugged. "It's just Ka...I was observing my bully's class

today."

Instantly, Mei looked murderous, "I can't believe they let that asshole in after what he did to you! And didn't he try to attack Extra-Credit-Kun during the exam? I should go straight to Nedzu and tell him that he needs to expel that jerk immediately…"

Izuku interrupted her with a sigh, "You can't do that, Mei. First of all, my teachers purposely never reported the bullying so there wouldn't be red flags when he applied to UA. Second of all, he didn't attack Shinso. Even if he *had* actually hurt him, it would have just been as collateral damage, or in retribution for yelling at him. Last of all, he probably shouldn't be expelled."

"And why not?!" Mei's yell caught the attention of the rest of the class, "He's a *bully,* Izu-kun! He made you miserable for years, he shouldn't be a hero!"

"Wait, what are we talking about?" Kohaku interrupted, pulling off the scarf she used to cover her hair while inventing, "What's this about a bully being a hero?"

"Nothing!" Izuku said quickly.

Mei shot him a glare before turning to the rest of the class, the traitor, "Izu-kun's old bully somehow got into the hero course. He was part of the class Izuku observed today."

"What?!" Hanzou bared his teeth, his normal wide smile becoming sharp and intimidating, "What's his name, I just want to talk."

"Everybody stop!" Izuku said sternly. "Nobody is going to do *anything.* Nobody's going to try to fight him and nobody's going to Nedzu. *Understood?"*

Mei didn't drop her glare, "But…"

"No." Izuku held her gaze.

"So what'd he do today that put you in such a funk?" Kohaku asked. "Like, I was expecting to have to tell you to shut up at least three times."

"See?!" Mei gestured broadly to her. "I'm not the only one who noticed!"

Izuku shot her a look, “It’s nothing.”

“Yeah, no, dude.” Hanzou said with a small smile. “We’re not buying that.”

Izuku looked around the room, hoping for someone to be on his side, but even Shiguro shrugged, “If it was really nothing, you, um, you probably wouldn’t be so insistent?”

Izuku sighed. He should have expected that his classmates would be at least as curious as he was, especially after meeting Mei. This was what he got for joining the support course, “It was just annoying. There was an odd number of students, something about a student leaving because of Eraserhead’s hazing yesterday, so he was put by himself against two other students, one with a speed quirk and the other with gravity negation.”

“Heh,” Kohaku chuckled, “Shouldn’t that be a good thing? I bet he got his ass handed to him, didn’t he?”

Izuku shook his head, “He put them both in the infirmary. Like, I know that violence is an inherent part of the hero industry. You can’t defeat villains without hurting them! But none of the other students were injured badly enough to have to get medical attention. One of the signs of an amazing hero is actually how much they’re able to *avoid* harm.” He shook his head. “I’m probably just being nitpicky because of our history.”

“Probably.” Hanzou agreed. “But that still doesn’t mean he should be in the hero course if he bullied you, dude. What’s to stop him from going totally crazy and hurting someone who’s not a villain?”

Shiguro nodded in agreement, “I wouldn’t want any of my old bullies to be heroes, either.”

“Yeah!” Mei crossed her arms in front of her chest. “So I’m going to Nedzu and telling him to kick this guy out! That rat loves you enough to give you a whole room, I’m sure he’d be happy to expel him for you.”

Izuku wasn’t so sure, but surprisingly, he realized that it might not be outside of the realm of possibility. It was so surreal to have adults who actually *cared,* and if that was all there was to it, then Izuku might actually be tempted to go to Nedzu himself, seeing as he most likely wouldn’t get punished for snitching, but the situation was a little more complicated than that, “It’s not that I want Katsuki to be a hero so

much that I don't want him to be a villain. Does that make sense?"

"He's a bully, Izu-kun!" Mei protested. "He's already a villain in my book!"

Izuku looked around and saw his classmates looking confused and still angry on his behalf, but didn't see any of the understanding he'd been expecting. He sighed, "He has the potential to be a decent hero, and his violent tendencies will be directed toward villains, but if he get expelled, or worse, black-listed, what'll he do? At least as a hero, his violent tendencies will be directed toward villains and people who deserve it, rather than any civilian who looks at him wrong."

"Still doesn't mean he deserves to be a hero." Mei grumbled.

Izuku shrugged, "Maybe not, but it isn't even a big deal! It's not like I'm going to see him a lot. We're in different departments and I'm going to start arriving early so I won't even see him on my way to school! The only interaction I'll even have with him will be my analysis project that he won't even read anyway! So just drop it."

His classmates didn't necessarily seem *happy* with his explanation, but at least they saw the logic in it. Izuku supposed that was about as good as he could hope for. Everyone here was extremely intelligent, they wouldn't have gotten in otherwise, but *nerds* often weren't treated the best. Add to that Hanzou's mutation quirk, Shiguro's shyness, and Mei being...well, *Mei* and there was a good chance that every single one of his classmates had been bullied at some point in their lives. Of course they wouldn't be happy about letting a bully off the hook.

"There's gotta be a way to get some sort of revenge, at least, right?" Hanzou said after a long minute. "I mean, we can't just let that dude get off scot free!"

Mei's eyes lit up, so Izuku interrupted, "That's really not necessary, guys!"

"No," Kohaku grinned, "but it'll be fun!"

Mei grinned in return, "Oooh! I like you! Come on, Izu-kun! Revenge! We're the support course! We'll have access to all his babies!"

Izuku rolled his eyes, "As fun as that would be, he's still a hero student, and it's our responsibility as support students to *support* him, not sabotage him. Not to mention that faulty support gear could

potentially endanger not only him, but also his classmates and eventually civilians, so revenge is out of the question."

Kohaku thought for a long moment, "What about just being a little petty?"

Izuku looked at her curiously, which she took as permission to continue, "I mean, obviously we wouldn't do anything to put him in danger or anything, that would be stupid, but you know how annoying a tiny little rock can be when it's in your shoe?"

Mei's eyes lit up again, "You're suggesting we do a bunch of tiny things to annoy him?"

Kohaku nodded, grinning, "It's how I got rid of my bullies back in elementary school, before everyone learned not to mess with me. The big thing is plausible deniability. Don't do anything that you couldn't talk your way out of if the teachers ask. But we'll know, which will be really satisfying if he gets a shirt that's say...half a size too small and the slightly wrong shade."

Izuku thought about that for a minute. He had to admit that it might be fun, provided that no actual harm was being done, since he didn't want to become a bully in return or put Katsuki in any danger, and if he could stop at any time, "I suppose it wouldn't be *too* bad to get a little payback."

"Yes!!!" Mei pumped her fist and hugged him, causing him to turn bright red as the rest of the class laughed at him. "Oh, we're gonna have so much fun! I'm gonna make so many little nuisance babies!"

Someone clearing their throat behind them made the class freeze and they turned around to see Midnight standing in the doorway, looking like she'd just arrived, "You're not being naughty, are you?"

Izuku and Mei shared a panicked glance before he sat up straight and gave a bright smile, "No, Ma'am! Or at least, I wasn't, I'm already in my seat! Everyone else, however…"

The class rushed to find their seats as Midnight laughed at their reactions. Izuku smiled and took out a new notebook, simply labeling it *nuisance.* He'd known this year was going to be fun.

Potential

Chapter Summary

Staff room gossip.

Majima walked into the staff room after school and made a beeline for the couch, face planting onto it with a groan, “Eraser, never let me give you a hard time about your problem children again.”

Aizawa snorted, but didn’t even look up from the paper he was grading, “Serves you right.”

“You have problem children this year?” Yamada grinned as he looked up from his own paperwork. “That must be fun! What are they like?”

Majima lifted his head off the couch just enough to look him in the eye, “You’ll know soon enough. They’ve decided to use one of your students as an extra credit project.”

Nedzu hid his smile behind his teacup, knowing full well exactly which students Majima was talking about. Of course, he hadn’t had a chance to peek at the cameras for class 1-F just yet, he still had a school to run after all, but Midoriya and his friend Hatsume had so much chaotic potential that there was little chance that Majima was talking about anyone else. The only question now was which student had they chosen as their victim.

“I’m the homeroom teacher for 1-C.” Yamada said slowly. “What would a couple of support course students want with a gen-ed kid?”

Majima sighed in exhaustion and sat up, “They’ve decided that one of your kids is getting into the hero course, and that they’re helping him do it.”

“…Can they even do that?” Snipe asked.

“There’s nothing in the rules against it!” Nedzu said cheerfully. “It might have taken a few loopholes if they were teachers, but since they’re all students, then they’re simply helping their friend, correct?”

“Of course you know exactly who I’m talking about.” Majima muttered. “You do know this is your fault, right? If it was just Hatsume, I could handle it, I’ve had plenty of students like her in the past, but whenever she’s combined with *your* protege…”

“Wait, you have a protege?!” Yamada yelled, making Aizawa finally look up from his papers to cancel his quirk, not that Yamada noticed or even cared. “You *never* take personal students! What even is this kid?!”

“A hellspawn, probably.” Aizawa said. “He has to be if he caught the rat’s attention.”

Nedzu simply smiled and let his faculty form their own opinions. Many of them already knew about Midoriya and some had even met him, but the few who hadn’t were all listening to the conversation with a mixture of curiosity and fear. All Might in particular looked vaguely terrified after the…chat that Nedzu had had with him the other day. Not that the scolding had been undeserved, of course, but it meant that he was probably a bit more primed to be scared of Midoriya’s potential and of Nedzu’s interest in him.

Nedzu was honestly more disappointed that All Might had forgotten about Midoriya after accidentally showing him his weakness than he was about the whole telling him not to be a hero thing. Nedzu *was* still a bit upset, since heroism had apparently been Midoriya’s lifelong dream, but the fact was that he was quirkless. As sad and terrible as it was, Nedzu couldn’t pretend that Midoriya wouldn’t be at a distinct natural disadvantage not just in combat, but in the flashy popularity contest that defined the industry. It probably didn’t matter which hero he had asked, they probably would have given the same answer, so at least All Might had tried to be polite about it.

Forgetting about the boy, however, was a much more serious offense. If Midoriya had secretly been a villain or had taken All Might’s advice badly, it could have been disastrous for all of Japan. Even if All Might had been 100% certain that Midoriya would never use his weakness against him, the boy’s knowledge of it would make him an appetizing target for the many villains that had a vendetta against the number one hero. By not communicating the encounter to anyone, not even Tsukauchi, All Might had put not only himself, but also an innocent civilian in danger, which was idiotic no matter what ranking he held. Nedzu would have to keep an eye on him while he was at UA to make sure he didn’t endanger a student like that again.

Which brought Nedzu to his next concern, which was the heroics exercise he had observed that afternoon. It had been…decent…but All Might obviously hadn’t known when it was appropriate to stop a match to prevent undue harm. Teaching students combat was tricky, since they obviously didn’t yet know how much force was appropriate

for certain situations. Some tended to use too little, so afraid of causing harm that they limited their own effectiveness, while others like young Bakugo tended to go overboard and use too much. It was a hard line to balance, especially for someone like All Might who was perfectly capable of punching away all of his problems, but it was one of the most important things that their students would learn over the course of their three years there, which meant that it was something that All Might would need to improve on sooner rather than later. Thankfully, the other teachers would be able to pick up the slack.

Speaking of the other teachers…

"Honestly, as much as I hate to admit a man is right…" Kayama drawled, "I think Aizawa might be right about this one. It's the green haired one, right, Nedzu? Midoriya?"

Nedzu nodded and gestured for her to continue as the rest of the teachers leaned forward slightly in anticipation and curiosity.

"When I showed up to teach today, the kid was leading his classmates in a revenge plot against the hero students." Kayama licked her lips and smiled. "It was delicious."

Nedzu didn't know whether to be proud, concerned, excited or angry, so he settled on gathering more information before making that decision, "Do you know which student?"

Kayama shrugged, "Not quite sure. I do know he's a first year and apparently bullied the poor boy. I love their idea of revenge, though! The mischievous little imps are going to do a bunch of subtle things to make the kid miserable, so just look for which of the first years encounters more than his fair share of daily frustrations and you'll have your target."

There were easier ways to find the child, if one just hacked into the right records. If all went well, as it undoubtedly would, Nedzu would have this boy's name by the end of the night, "And he was a bully, you said?"

"Uh, Nedzu, sir?" All Might said hesitantly. "Please tell me that you're going to stop this rather than joining in…"

All Might visibly gulped at the sharp smile Nedzu gave him, "Now, All Might, one of the goals of a teacher is to help one's students accomplish their goals! What kind of a teacher would I be if I didn't give Midoriya any assistance.

“B-but…”

“Don’t bother.” Aizawa said. “That kind of pettiness is right up Nedzu’s alley, so at least he’s only going to be taking it out on one brat rather than the whole of humanity. The only thing he’ll have to worry about is the conspiracy theorists trying to accuse the kid of being his secret love child or something.”

“So!” Yamada grinned. “I get to meet the little listener? Which of my students has he adopted?”

“I think Midoriya said his name is Shinso.” Powerloader sighed. “He has a brainwashing quirk.”

“Ah! Good choice, I approve!” Nedzu chirped. He remembered Shinso from the exams, of course. It was a shame that he didn’t get enough points, but despite his and Aizawa’s best efforts, the school board had shot down every single one of the alternate exam ideas they had proposed, leaving Shinso in general education until he was able to prove himself during the sports festival.

“Brainwashing?” Aizawa asked.

“It’s an intriguing quirk, I can see why Midoriya was drawn to it!” Nedzu chirped. “Young Shinso can control anyone provided that they answer one of his questions.”

“And of course, it’s useless against robots.” Aizawa muttered and dragged a hand down his face. “Please tell your protege not to only focus on the kid’s quirk. With a drawback like that, he’ll have to be able to fight without it.”

“Oh, you don’t have to worry about that.” Nedzu dismissed. “I do believe that Midoriya would be the last person to limit a person based entirely on their quirk.”

“Oh?” Kayama asked. “And why is that?”

There was a moment of tense silence before All Might, to Nedzu’s surprise, answered, “Because he’s quirkless.”

“That explains it.” Aizawa said after a moment. “If he caught your attention, he obviously doesn't let it limit him. Good. Now let’s see if the other problem child sees it the same way.”

Abduction

Chapter Summary

Shinso meets half of the chaos duo!

Chapter Notes

Look at this beautiful little drawing Ro made of Izuku!

Izukul leaned back in his seat after finishing up the list of theories he'd been working on. He'd spent the morning reviewing the videos he had of the hero students and making rough lists of potential ideas for improvement that he could clean up once he'd seen their quirks in action more, but for now, there wasn't much else he could do on that project, which meant that it was time for Extra-Credit-Kun.

Oh god, Mei really *was* starting to rub off on him, wasn't she?

Izuku shook his head with a chuckle as he grabbed the notebook he'd dedicated to their extra credit project and opened Shinso's file, only to realize that he was at a dead end there as well. At least with the hero students, he had some combat videos to analyze, but all Izuku had for Shinso was his student file and the video of his entrance exam, which obviously didn't show the full potential of his quirk because he couldn't use it on robots. If Izuku wanted his analysis to be of any use to Shinso at all, he needed more information.

The easiest way to get that information would be to simply ask and hope that Shinso wouldn't be too creeped out to answer him. Well, even if he *was* creeped out, he'd probably still answer if Izuku explained that it was to help him do better in the sports festival. Anyway, it didn't really even matter because he was probably in class right now...but it wouldn't hurt to check, right?

Before he could second guess himself, Izuku opened up the class schedule for class 1-C. Even if Shinso was in class, which he should be, it would still be helpful to know his schedule so he and Mei could track him down later.

Speaking of Mei, she chose that moment to burst through the door to Izuku's workroom without knocking. She didn't even wait for him to look up before she had draped herself over his shoulders, groaning dramatically, "Izu-kun, help! I can't make Shinso's babies!"

Izuku snorted, “Most girls have to actually *meet* a guy before creating his children.”

Mei grabbed his shoulder and spun his chair around so he was facing her and could see the manic grin that had just spread across her face, “That’s a brilliant idea!”

Izuku smiled and shook his head fondly, “Let me guess, you need more info on his quirk and fighting style before you can really get started?”

“Yep!” Mei picked an empty spot on Izuku’s desk and sat down, “You too?”

Izuku nodded and turned back to his screen, “I was just looking up his schedule to see when the best time to meet him would be.”

“Well, make it ASAP!” Mei said impatiently. “I want to start making babies!”

“You can’t just rush these things, Mei-chan, it isn’t polite.” Izuku told her patiently. “We can’t just take him out of class…or maybe we can.”

Mei jumped off the desk and leaned over her shoulder, “Wait, what is it?!”

“He has a study period right now.” Izuku pointed to the screen. “If we got Powerloader’s permission, we could probably pull him out of class for a few minutes, since he wouldn’t actually be missing any lessons.”

“Let’s do it!” Mei hugged him tightly before pulling him to his feet and pushing him toward the door. “What are you waiting for?! I have babies to make!”

Their classmates glanced up at Mei’s declaration as the door opened, but they spared the two less than a second before shaking their heads and going back to work on their own projects. Izuku still thought it was a little weird how quickly the class had seemed to just accept their antics, but he wasn’t going to look a gift horse in the mouth. He had Mei and that was enough for him right now. He’d probably just manage to work himself into an anxiety attack if he tried to second-guess every interaction he’d had with his classmates looking for ways that they actually hated him, and honestly, he was too busy with his analysis projects to have any time for that right now.

It didn’t take them long at all to reach Powerloader’s desk, especially

not with Mei still pushing him in her excitement. Powerloader simply sighed and looked at them as they approached, “Should I be concerned about what you two are cooking up?”

“No!” Izuku said at the same time that Mei shouted, “Yes!”

Unfortunately, Mei’s voice was just a little louder.

“We just want to ask Shinso some questions about his quirk.” Izuku said quickly. “I looked and he has a study period right now, so we were hoping we could borrow him and bring him here. We’d use my workroom so we wouldn’t bother the other students. Please?”

Izuku had learned his puppy dog eyes from his mom, and honestly, he wasn’t even aware that he was doing them until he caught Mei mimicking his expression out of the corner of his eye. Powerloader simply looked at them tiredly for a long moment before caving, “Midoriya, you go and get him. I’m not sure I trust Mei not to blow something up between here and there.”

“Come on, it’s not like there are that many explosive things between here and the general education department!” Mei exclaimed. “Just the wiring...and probably the fire extinguishers if you count foam as an explosion...Oh! And the security system! Izu-kun, do you know if there are any bombs in the security system?”

“Yeah, it’s probably for the best if I just go…” Izuku said, ignoring the way Mei pouted at him as he turned back to Powerloader. “Could I have a note explaining the situation in case Shinso’s teacher asks why I need him?”

“Present Mic should already be expecting you.” Powerloader said tiredly. “I mentioned your little project to the other teachers and warned him that it was only a matter of time before you dropped by.”

“Oh.” Izuku didn’t know if it was good or bad that the entire faculty knew about their plans to help Shinso. Honestly, he’d never had teachers care about what he wanted to do before, so this was all new territory. “That’s good then.”

Powerloader nodded, “Get back quick before Hatsume blows up our lab again.”

Mei cackled and ran back toward her desk, “Good luck!”

Hitoshi tapped his pencil idly on his notebook as he reviewed English verb structure for the third time. Not that having a second language wouldn't be useful, but he couldn't help thinking that the hero students were probably training right now and getting more and more of an unfair advantage every minute that Hitoshi spent studying academics. There was only so long until the sports festival and his last chance to get into the hero course, so he didn't want to waste any time.

The silence of the classroom was interrupted by a quiet knocking of the door and a tiny-looking kid with tangled green curls and large eyes poked his head in, "Present Mic, sir? Would it be alright if I borrowed Shinso for a few minutes?"

Hitoshi froze as his entire class swiveled in their seats to look at him curiously, as if he had any idea why a kid he'd never seen before in his life was interrupting his class asking for him by name.

His classmates' curiosity was almost palpable as Mic-sensei looked up from his desk and gave the boy a mischievous smile, "You're one of Powerloader's gremlins, right?"

The kid sputtered for a moment at Mic's wording before apparently giving up on being embarrassed and letting out a sigh as he walked fully into the room, "Yes, sir. He said that he mentioned things to you…"

"Of course!" Mic grinned. "Shinso, go ahead and grab your things. There's no guarantee you'll be back by the end of class." As Hitoshi hurried to comply, Mic turned back to the kid. "Try to return him in one piece, ya dig?"

Hitoshi's eyes widened and he felt himself pale slightly as the kid returned Mic's smile with a small one of his own, "No guarantees. I'm not the one you need to worry about, but also I'm not responsible for anything Mei-chan does when she's excited."

"Oooh!" Mic laughed. "I can see why Nedzu likes you so much!"

The class erupted into whispers and Hitoshi was starting to wonder if he would have a better chance of surviving if he just jumped out the window. Mic-sensei wouldn't *actually* let this mystery kid, or whoever this Mei-chan person was, hurt him...right?

Hitoshi finished packing his backpack and gulped as the kid smiled at him. Normally, a bright smile like that would put him more at ease,

but after hearing the kid basically plot his murder, it just looked vaguely terrifying. Reluctantly, Hitoshi followed his...kidnapper? Was that what the kid was? What was even happening?

His kidnapper didn't say anything as he led Hitoshi down the hallway to a part of the school he didn't recognize, not that *that* was helpful at all, considering that he'd been at UA for less than a week. He had no idea what was happening anymore and honestly, he was too afraid to ask. All he knew was that this kid might kill him and his teacher wouldn't even care. So much for the teachers at UA being different.

His kidnapper still didn't break the silence and as they got even more lost in the maze that was UA, Shinso eventually got fed up and decided that if he was going to get murdered anyway, it wouldn't hurt to at least *ask* this kid why he'd kidnapped him. At the worst, he'd just get killed a little sooner, right?

"Um…" Hitoshi's voice sounded too loud and he had to take a step back as the kid pinned him with those wide eyes, giving Hitoshi a strange sense that this kid knew everything about him and was simply dissecting him with his gaze, "I have a few questions."

The kid smiled brightly again, "Of course! I might not be able to give the best answers, but I'll try!"

"Ok…" Hitoshi took a breath, "Who are you? Where are we going? Why did you just kidnap me? Finally, who is Mei-chan and should I be writing my will?"

The kid looked at him in shock for a long moment before he started giggling uncontrollably, "Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry! I didn't...and I completely forgot to introduce myself, so no wonder you're...and Present Mic called me a gremlin, which probably didn't help anything. This is probably why our classmates are terrified of us, huh?"

"Probably." Shinso said, not because he knew this kid's classmates, but more because he didn't really have any other response to that. "So…?"

"Oh! Right!" The kid jumped slightly and started walking into the labyrinth that was UA again. "My name is Izuku Midoriya and we're heading back to my classroom. Mei-chan is my best friend. She probably won't hurt you, she just gets really excited about her inventions and they don't always work the first time, which isn't that bad, you just need to be a little careful in case they explode unexpectedly. We're support students...obviously, since Mei-chan has

inventions to explode. Um...what else…?”

Oddly enough, Midoriya’s rambling was actually calming and made him seem less like some mysterious psychopath, so Hitoshi actually found himself feeling a little more at ease as he cocked an eyebrow, “Why you kidnapped me?”

Midoriya furrowed his forehead as his voice dropped to a mutter, “I didn’t...why would I...well, I guess I *did* kind of steal you away unexpectedly, but that wasn’t…”

“Midoriya.” Hitoshi interrupted the kid’s mutter storm and gestured for him to continue. “Why did you kidnap me?”

“Oh, um…” Midoriya chuckled awkwardly and rubbed the back of his neck, “I don’t want to get into too much detail without Mei-chan here, but basically, we’re going to get you into the hero course!”

...what?

Starting Line

Chapter Summary

Shinso meets the other half of the chaos duo.

Hitoshi's mind was still reeling by the time they arrived at a large door that obviously led into a support lab. What did Midoriya mean when he said they were going to help him get into the hero course? *Could* they even do that? How…?

He was knocked out of his stupor, quite literally, when the door blew off its hinges and threw him and Midoriya against the far wall of the wallway. It didn't hurt as bad as he would have expected, and honestly he was more dazed than hurt, but maybe that had something to do with the whole situation and not the fact that he'd just gotten thrown against a wall and was now sitting on the hallway floor.

"Mei-chan!" Midoriya yelled. "You could have hurt us!"

"Don't worry, Izu-kun, that was just a disorienting blast!" A girl with bright pink hair and coveralls tied around her waist appeared in the doorway, nonchalantly moving a giant pair of goggles from her face to her head as if she hadn't just blown up half the hallway. "They'll cause damage to things, but not to people! Perfect for hostage situations!"

"Oh!" Midoriya scrambled to his feet and grabbed a notebook from his pocket. "How does that affect people like Cemontoss who are, objectively, made from things? There's a kid in 1-A who can turn into rock and another in 1-B who can turn into steel, would they be affected? Would it only damage them when their quirks are activated? Or is the damage caused because the thing is non-living, in which case quirks wouldn't affect it because the person with the quirk is still alive? What about…"

"What the…" A hero that Hitoshi assumed was Powerloader appeared in the doorway, his hands going to his helmet as he took in the scene. "How? Hatsume, I literally looked away for two seconds!"

"Well, technically, an explosion takes only a fraction of a second to begin." Midoriya began. "But the actual chemical reaction can take several seconds to run its course, depending on the chemicals involved, but you wouldn't be able to stop it once it reached the

activation energy…”

“Didn’t you two promise to not bother the other students if I let you bring Shinso here?” Powerloader asked.

“Oh, it’s a support lab!” Hatsume dismissed. “Explosions are normal! We’re not bothering…”

“Shut the fuck up and go to your boyfriend’s room already!” A female voice called out loudly from inside the classroom. Midoriya turned bright red and sputtered, but Hatsume apparently didn’t care about whatever her classmate was implying, because she simply zeroed in on Hitoshi and leaned down until she was only inches away from his face. He instinctively pressed himself as far against the wall as he could, which unfortunately wasn’t very far.

She smiled at him manically, “You must be Extra-Credit-Kun! Izu-kun’s told me so much about you! We’re gonna have so much fun!”

Hitoshi simply blinked at her as he waited for his brain to catch up and maybe, just maybe, make sense of her words, “E-extra-Credit-Kun?”

“Mei-chan!” Midoriya shoved her away from him and shook his head as he helped Hitoshi up. “You can’t just call people by nicknames like that the first time you meet them! Shinso has a name!”

“Not important.” Hatsume dismissed. “What's important is that I'm going to make his babies!”

Hitoshi choked on nothing and almost fell back onto the floor again as the crazy girl grabbed his hand and pulled him into the lab with Midoriya following close behind. He barely got a glimpse of the other students before he was being yanked into a small dark room lined with computers and the door shut ominously behind him, trapping him with the two crazy students who had just kidnapped him. Was being a hero really worth all this?

Yes. Yes, it was.

Hitoshi took a deep breath and looked at his kidnappers with a well-practiced bored expression, “So...are you gonna explain what’s going on now?”

Hatsume turned and slapped Midoriya’s chest, “Izu-kun! Why didn’t you explain anything to Extra-Credit-Kun?!”

“I was waiting for you!” Midoriya defended. “I thought you wanted…”

“Don’t waste time on my account, Izu-kun, we have work to do!” Hatsume turned back to Hitoshi. “You, Extra-Credit-Kun, are our new project!”

Hitoshi didn’t think that explained anything except for the nickname he’d apparently acquired, but thankfully Midoriya was a little more willing to fill in the gaps.

“Powerloader has agreed to give us extra credit if we use our skills to help you.” Midoriya sighed as he turned on the lights and sat down in front of the line of computers. “I’m an analyst and Mei-chan is obviously an inventor, so we’re going to...well, be your support, I guess? I’ll help you analyze and train your quirk and she’ll make you a support item that you can use in the sports festival next month to give you the best possible chance of transfering into the hero course. Honestly, it’s ridiculous that they wouldn’t let you in the hero course in the first place, but at least now you can prove everyone wrong, right?”

Hitoshi thought about that for a long moment, “So you’re basically going to train me to be a hero so you can get extra credit?”

Midoriya smiled awkwardly, “Yes? I mean, only if that’s ok! We don’t *have* to if you don’t want us to, I mean, I get that we can kinda be a lot sometimes and…”

“Don’t give him a choice, Izu-kun!” Hatsume exclaimed. “We’re helping you and that’s final! Ok, Extra-Credit-Kun?”

Hitoshi couldn’t help snorting, “Well, I’m not exactly in a position to say no, but are you sure you even want to help a kid with a villain’s quirk become even *more* dangerous? What if I go rogue like everyone’s always told me?”

His kidnappers obviously hadn’t missed any of the bitterness in Hitoshi’s voice, because they shared a glance and when Hatsume responded, she sounded angry, “Ok, that’s it. You’re gonna win this and we’re gonna prove those assholes wrong! I am so sick of people being rude to my friends just because of downright stupid prejuduces!”

“F-friends?” Hitoshi’s brain went blank. Hatsume couldn’t possibly be including *him* in that, could she? They’d literally just met! But then, she’d already talked about having his babies...whatever the hell that

meant.

“It’s best not to fight her friendship.” Midoriya gave him a small, determined smile. “When Mei-chan gets something in her brain, it’s best to just roll with it. So! Let’s start with your quirk! It’s brainwashing, right? Verbal response based?”

Hitoshi nodded, still reeling, “Yeah. But, uh, I can’t control higher brain functions, just basically make the person into a puppet.”

Midoriya had whipped out a notebook and was rapidly writing down everything Hitoshi was saying, “How do they snap out of it? Do you have to release your control?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “I can, like if they complete all the orders I gave them, but it’s more common for someone else to jostle them, which can break my hold. That’s how most of my classmates *rescued* anyone they thought I’d used my quirk on.”

“Hmm,” Midoriya ignored Hatsume’s annoyed buzzing next to him, “Ask me a question.”

“Why?” Hitoshi asked suspiciously

Midoriya grinned, “So you can brainwash me of course! I need to know how it feels to be on the receiving end and it’ll help me explore your limits…”

His eyes went blank as Hitoshi took control, glancing over at Hatsume, expecting her to be creeped out at the very least. To his surprise, however, she just looked excited and grabbed Midoriya’s notebook from his lax grip, flipping through some of the pages until she’d found what she was looking for, “Ok! Test time! Izu-kun already made a list of orders he wants you to give him, so let’s start! Tell him to stand on one foot!”

Hitoshi hesisted, glancing between Hatsume and Izuku. He’d learned the hard way not to give anyone any functional orders without their express permission. “I...um, I should ask him first.”

“Well then, just ask him now!” Hatsume said impatiently. “It’ll be another experiment to see if he tells the truth under your quirk!”

“It doesn’t work like that.” Hitoshi griped and turned to Midoriya. “Tell me whether or not you’re ok with me giving you orders.”

Just as he'd expected, Midoriya simply sat and stared at him blankly. Hitoshi turned back to Hatsume, who looked vaguely disappointed, "See? Verbal responses count as a higher brain function. I'm just gonna wake him up and ask."

Hitoshi released his hold and watched nervously as the light came back into Midoriya's eyes. Sure, he'd *said* that he wanted Hitoshi to brainwash him, but what if he got angry? It turned out that Hitoshi didn't have anything to be worried about, because the moment Midoriya was in control of himself again, he just shook his head and grinned brightly.

"That was so cool!" Midoriya grabbed his notebook back from Hatsume and scribbled a few things down before handing the notebook to Hitoshi, "Ok, so this time I want you to tell me to do the things on this list, and if I haven't woken up by the end of it, Mei, could you jostle me to wake me up? I want to compare that to Shinso releasing his control voluntarily."

"Sure thing, Izu-kun!" Hatsume grinned and grabbed her phone to start recording the session. "Ready!"

"Do you think you'll wake up before the end?" Hitoshi couldn't help asking. He had to ask a question to establish control anyway, so he may as well as one he was curious about.

"I don't know." Midoriya said. "It'll depend on how your quirk deals with impossible orders."

"Ok?" Hitoshi was pretty sure that they'd already figured that out, since Midoriya had just done nothing rather than answer his question earlier, but apparently, he was no longer the expert on his own quirk.

He quickly took control of Midoriya and started going down the list. Most of the orders were easy things like stand up, sit down, stand on one foot, ect. The most interesting thing that happened was when Hitoshi ordered Midoriya to sit down on a stool. There wasn't a stool in the little room they were in, so to Hitoshi's surprise, Midoriya actually took the initiative to leave the room and go sit in the stool out by Powerloader's desk. Hitoshi almost died of embarrassment as he ran after Midoriya, frantically apologizing to the other support students, but he finally decided that their classmates must be used to their antics because the only response they gave to their classmate coming out practically braindead was a few curious glances and a few giggles to Powerloader's exasperation.

“Shinso, I’m assuming you’re currently in control of Midoriya?” Powerloader asked with a sigh.

Hitoshi froze. This was it. This was how he got expelled from UA. He should have known better than to brainwash a UA student, even with their permission, and now he was going to get punished for his stupidity. He should have known this whole situation was too good to be true. He stared at the floor, clamping down on his anger and disappointment, “Yes sir. I’ll release him from my quirk right away.”

“There’s no need for that.” Powerloader said. “I’m sure you’re in the middle of an experiment, right?”

Hitsoshi hesitantly nodded. Was…was Powerloader just going to accept that?! He wasn’t going to expel him for using his quirk on a fellow student?! Apparently not, because Powerloader simply nodded as if this situation were completely normal…or as normal as any situation could be when Midoirya and Hatsume were involved.

“Shinso, please tell Midoriya to get back into his room.” Powerloader said. “And make sure he doesn’t run into anything dangerous on the way back, there are power tools in here.”

Hitoshi nodded frantically, grateful that he had somehow avoided getting expelled, and ordered Midoriya to go back to Hatsume, who was currently rolling on the floor of the little room dying of laughter. With his luck, he could just imagine Midoriya trying to walk all the way back home completely brainwashed if he told him to *go to his room.*

After that minor blip, everything went smoothly. Everything, that was, until Hitoshi read the last order on Midoriya’s list.

“Hatsume?” Hitoshi pointed to the page. “Does he really want me to order him to do this?”

“Don’t call me Hatsume, Extra-Credit-Kun, Mei-chan is fine!” Hatsume leaned over and read the order. “That one’s actually a pretty important experiment, so yeah, he definitely wants you to do it.”

“O-ok?” Hitoshi took a deep breath and looked at Midoriya, who was waiting in the middle of the room. “Do a backflip.”

Midoriya squatted and jumped backwards, only to hit the ground as his attempt at a backflip completely failed.

“Ow…” Midoriya groaned and rolled over, the impact more than enough to knock him from Hitoshi’s control, “Ok, so the person will still try to complete impossible commands, but won’t be able to if the task is outside their ability level. Nice to know.”

“I am so sorry.” Hitoshi ran to help him up. “I shouldn’t have given you that order, are you hurt? Do you need me to leave? I'm so sorry, I should stop asking questions, I’m probably making you really uncomfortable…”

Midoriya just laughed with a wince, “No! I put that on there on purpose! It was the only thing I could think of that, while theoretically possible, wasn’t a skill that I have. My first thought was that I would just wake up when given the order, or maybe my brain would subsciously know how to complete the task...wait, do you know how to do a backflip?”

“Do I look like I know how to do a backflip?” Hitoshi deadpanned. “And why would that even matter?”

“Because your quirk could be connecting your target’s body to *your* brain instead of theirs.” Midoriya explained as he took back his notebook. “Mei, make a note that we should ask Recovery Girl if she has access to some kind of brain scanner. We need to know whose brain lights up when tasks are being done, Shinso’s or his target’s.”

“Will do, Izu-kun!” Hatsumei said happily. “I could probably build one myself if…”

Hitoshi couldn’t help but feel like he was intruding as both of them dissolved into muttering and wrote down their observations in their respective notebooks. He was starting to wonder if he should just go back to class when one of Midoriya’s more coherent mutterings caught his attention, “...and we know you can modify memories, so…”

“No, I can’t.” Hitoshi interrupted before he could stop himself and he leaned back slightly when both of his kidnappers stopped their notetaking to stare at him.

Midoriya frowned, “But in the footage you could.”

“I don't’ know what you think you saw, but,” Hitoshi shrugged helplessly, “I mean, I’ve never actually *tried* it, I would’ve gotten in way too much trouble for something like that, but I can’t even make someone answer a question, so I’m pretty sure I can’t make someone forget something or anything like that.”

“Hmm…” Midoriya tapped his cheek with his pencil a few times. “Mei, what color is Shinso’s hair?”

Hatsumei grinned, “Purple!”

Midoriya nodded, “Ok, now turn and face the wall. Shinso, put her under your quirk so we can try something.”

Wait, were they actually going to try to modify Hatsume’s memories? It seemed like that shouldn’t be something she should be ok with, but when it came to these two, Shinso didn’t really know if any normal rules applied, “Umm, if she wants me to, I can, but she’d have to answer one of my questions.”

“Ohh!” Even from the back, Hatsume’s excitement was obvious. “Do I get to be the test subject this time?!”

“Are you actually crazy?” Hitoshi asked incredulously.

Hatsume simply laughed, “Probably!”

Hitoshi activated his quirk and shook his head in disbelief. These two had to be insane, “Ok, what now?”

Midoriya thought for a second, “Tell her to remember your hair being green.”

Hitoshi still didn’t think this was actually going to work, so he went ahead and gave the order, then released his control.

Midoriya smiled at him, then turned to Hatsume, “Ok, Mei-chan, before you turn around, what color is Shinso’s hair?”

“Is this a trick question?” Hatsume sounded confused. “It’s green, just like yours Izu-kun! I thought you guys were going to mess with my memories or something?”

Hitoshi’s jaw dropped and Midoriya’s face split into a bright grin, “Turn around!”

Hatsume turned quickly and did a double take as soon as she saw Hitoshi, “Whoa! That’s so trippy!”

Hitoshi couldn’t even think. He...he hadn’t even known he could do that. Until he’d seen her reaction, he’d half-thought they were just being nice or something, but he’d actually changed her memories, “How...how did you know I could do that?”

Izuku smiled, “I watched your entrance exam. That other examinee you got in a fight with? I know him. He wouldn’t have let something like that slide unless he actually *had* forgotten about you like you ordered. All that left was confirming the theory.”

Hatsume grinned and leaned close to his face, “I’m gonna have so much fun making your babies!”

Hitoshi walked into class 1--C at the end of the hour shell-shocked and with a smear of soot on his cheek that he hadn’t gotten around to wiping off after Hatsume’s welcome explosion. The moment that Present Mic saw him, the corners of his mouth started twitching and it was obvious that he was holding back giggles, “So...how was it?”

“I think I just made a deal with the devil.” Hitoshi said numbly. “Actually, two devils. Is that worse? It feels like that’s worse.”

This time, Mic-Sensei didn’t even bother to hold back his laughter, “Yeah, the support course is like that. Go ahead and take a seat.”

Hitoshi ignored his classmates’ whispers as he made his way to his seat and took out his things for the next lesson. Yes, Midoriya and Hatsume were...overwhelming, but in less than an hour, they’d discovered things about his quirk that Hitoshi hadn’t even realized after ten years of having it. If anyone at UA could get him into the hero course, it was his kidnappers.

So if those two really were demons, Hitoshi couldn’t quite bring himself to regret signing away his soul.

Noise

Chapter Summary

> The chaos duo runs more experiments on their extra credit project.

Chapter Notes

> Look at all this art!
> I'm totally a fish
> Sour Cream
> Tegdirb

"You rely on your quirk too much."

Izuku almost felt bad saying it, especially since Shinso was taking time out of his day to talk to them during lunch. His quirk was amazing, so of course he relied on it, and it was part of him, so Izuku couldn't discount that, but…

"Yep!" Mei piped up, shoveling a spoonful of rice in her mouth. "But don't feel bad! Most heroes do, but that's why you have us!"

Shinso looked at them skeptically, "And how am I supposed to be a hero without my quirk?"

Izuku waved his hands frantically in front of him, "Not without your quirk! We would *never* tell you to hold yourself back like that! It's just that...well, you see…"

"It's the activation requirements." Mei interrupted. "You're pretty good at making people respond to you, but eventually you're going to come across someone who has more self control than you have sass."

Izuku couldn't hold back a huff of shocked laughter, "Yeah. What she said. The fact is that once people know about your quirk, you have a huge handicap. It would be like if a villain immediately took Snipe's gun at the beginning of a fight. He would still have his quirk, but he wouldn't be able to use it."

"The only difference here is that Snipe can use his quirk to protect his gun, you can't." Mei thought for a moment. "He also carries an extra gun. Izu-kun! Let's give Extra-Credit-Kun a gun!!!"

Shinso looked at them in shock and a bit of fear, so Izuku figured he wasn't *quite* ready for that, despite the amazing potential the idea had, "Maybe let's start with something smaller, like how we can prevent villains from finding out about his quirk."

"Nice thought." Shinso pointed at them with his chopsticks. "But that's the thing about my quirk. If you fall for it once, you know how it works."

"Maybe…" Izuku flipped through his notebook until he found a page that he'd used to scribble ideas. "How long does your connection last?"

Shinso shrugged, "No idea. I've never been allowed to control someone for more than a few minutes. That experiment with you the other day was as long as I've ever gone."

"That's not what I…" Izuku had to take a second to gather his thoughts. "I mean, that's good to know, but how long can you wait between getting a response and taking control?"

Shinso looked surprised, then thoughtful, "I don't know. I always thought it was best to just take control as soon as I can, so I've never actually tried to wait or anything…"

Izuku grinned and flipped to a new page in his notebook, "Perfect! So, how do you know the connection has been formed? Do you have to try to brainwash then or can you just feel it?"

"I can feel it." Shinso said quietly. "It's like the person is inside my brain... I'm sorry, I shouldn't have told you that. I don't want to make you uncomfortable."

Mei responded by slapping Shinso over the head, "Stop that! Good experiments are uncomfy! You never learn anything interesting just by sitting on your butt! So embrace the awkward!!!"

Izuku laughed, then saw the shocked expression on Shinso's face and laughed even harder, "I didn't know you could give inspirational speeches, Mei-chan!"

"I'm a woman of many talents." Mei said cryptically. "You'll never discover them all!"

"And on that terrifying note," Shinso drawled, "Do you want to start?"

"Of course!" Izuku responded with a grin. "Do you have the connection

now?"

Shinso nodded with a concentrated look on his face, but didn't respond. Izuku nodded, it must take a fair amount of focus to keep the connection without completing the brainwash, "Mei, start the timer."

"Already on it, Izu-kun!" Mei pressed a few buttons on her phone and the experiment officially began. "So... Izu-kun. How are the hero students doing? Any opportunities for me to make super awesome babies?!"

"They're doing well!" Izuku smiled and grabbed one of the many notebooks he'd created for the project. Each student had their own notebook dedicated to their quirks and ideas, and while some were still completely empty, others were already halfway full. The notebook Izuku happened to grab was for one of the class 1-B students with a really cool copy quirk, "Take this guy, Monoma, for example! He can copy any quirk for five minutes, but I think there might be a way for him to create...well, basically a stockpile of quirks. If he has to touch a person's whole body, then that won't work, but if it works with any dna…"

"Then he can incorporate different quirks into his costume and always have them on hand when he needs them!" Mei grinned. "I like the way you think, Izu-kun!'

Suddenly, Izuku's brain went foggy as the increasingly familiar feeling of Shinso's quirk washed over him. It only lasted a few seconds before Shinso released his control.

"I am so sorry." Shinso was a little out of breath and looked pale and slightly sweaty. "I...I held on for as long as I could, but...why is that so difficult?"

"Because your quirk wants action." Izuku said. "Instinctively, people want to either do something, or not. No one *likes* being caught in an in between place. But this is great! You don't have to take control immediately, which gives you a few minutes to disguise your real activation requirements. Mei-chan! How long did he last?"

"Two minutes, eight seconds!" Mei declared. "I'd prefer if it were a little longer, but.."

"But we can train for that." Izuku agreed. "Ideally, we could get him up to five minutes between response and control before the sports festival, but we'll of course have to see how things work and…"

“Wait, back up.” Shinso interrupted. “What do you mean my *real* activation requirements? And shouldn’t I be focused on keeping control of people longer or controlling more people or giving more advanced orders or something? What’s the point of training to wait before taking control, which isn’t easy by the way, when as a hero, I should be trying to resolve situations as quickly as possible?”

Izuku looked at Mei, who shrugged. He thought they’d explained everything pretty well…

Shinso sighed, “How about you two start again at the beginning, but this time pretend that you’re talking to someone who doesn’t have a single clue you’re trying to say…because I don’t.”

“Oh…” Izuku glanced at Mei again before taking a deep breath to try to organize his thoughts, “Um, ok. So, the main problem with your quirk is that it’s more effective if your opponent doesn’t know what it is, right?”

“That’s the basic idea, yeah.” Shinso rolled his eyes. “But what does that have to do with the time between their response and my control? Because from where I’m sitting, it seemed like a non sequiter.”

“It’s a red herring!” Mei grinned.

Shinso didn’t look any less confused and raised an eyebrow at Izuku after apparently giving up getting anything close to a normal answer from Mei.

“It’s about distracting whoever you’re fighting with and burying the truth inside a bunch of useless information.” Izuku explained. “For example, sometimes in books, something important will be thrown out, but the readers won’t realize it, because the man with the scar who turns out to be the villain was mentioned right alongside a woman with a large hat who was completely unimportant.”

“If you take control immediately after you get an answer,” Mei flicked Shinso on the forehead, “then it’s like putting a big neon sign above your head explaining how your quirk works.”

“Oh thanks.” Shinso said dryly.

“But,” Izuku said quickly, “if you wait a few minutes between establishing the connection and giving the order, and use those minutes to do things like make direct eye contact or establish physical contact, or…I don’t know, jump up and down three times while

singing nursery rhymes, then…"

"Then no one will know exactly which of those things established the connection." Mei finished.

"I don't sing." Shinso deadpanned, but Izuku could see the faintest trace of a smile in his eyes, and it looked like he finally understood what they were going for. "Ok, so when do I start."

"Well, technically you started today." Izuku said cheekily. "But we'll have a schedule for you by tomorrow if you come by after classes. Do you have anyone at home that you can practice your quirk with?"

Shinso's expression immediately closed off...interesting, "No."

"That's alright!" Izuku said, forcing a layer of cheeriness past his curiosity and, surprisingly, a little bit of anger on Shinso's behalf. "Then you'll just have to practice with us! I don't want you to do any more today, since this exercise is still so new and it's the first time that your brain has had to do it, so we should let it rest, but starting tomorrow, you should start practicing that waiting exercise we just did two or three times a day. For the sports festival, you also need to be able to complete distracting tasks before you officially activate your quirk, so we should focus on getting you to the point where you don't even have to think about it and have full autonomy on when you activate your connection!"

Shinso looked a little pale, but Izuku noticed that he also looked determined, just like himself when he used to say he'd be a hero despite his quirklessness. It didn't work out for him, but if he could still help people like Shinso who deserved to be heroes, then that was more than enough. Shinso would overcome every obstacle put in his path and save so many people and Izuku would have a hand in that! It was almost even better than his own old dream.

"Perfect!" Mei broke the tension by grabbing Shinso by the arm and dragging him back out into the main lab. "Now that Izu-kun's had a chance to do his thing, it's my turn! I'm so excited! I have so many awesome babies for you to try!"

"B-babies?!" Shinso looked nervous and a little shocked, but why…? Izuk felt a little bad, but he couldn't help laughing when he realized that he had never actually explained some of Mei's more... exciting eccentricities to Shinso. Oh well, better late than never he supposed.

"She means her inventions!" Izuku managed to gasp between his

chuckles. "Mei-chan calls her inventions her babies because she cares about them so much."

"I *made* them, Izu-kun!" Mei cried indignantly. "If *you* poured your heart and soul into something you'd call them your babies too!"

"I *do* pour my heart and soul into something." Izuku grinned cheekily. "I call them my notebooks."

"So... we're just going to be looking at inventions," Shinso confirmed, "not experimenting with human children?"

"The only human children we'll be experimenting on are ourselves!" Mei said gleefully, grabbing a large cardboard box from her workstation. "Extra-Credit-Kun! Grab that box under the table!"

Shinso shrugged and went to pick up the box, only to stumble when the weight was more than he expected. "What's in this thing, rocks!?"

"Oh hush, it's not that heavy." Mei dismissed. "Izu-kun, grab the other one."

Izuku shrugged and ignored the way that Shinso looked at him knowingly as he tried to pick up the box, only to grunt and fall backwards onto his butt, "Mei-chan, seriously?! How strong are you?!"

"It's not my fault you boys are weak." Mei shrugged. "Come on, we need to steal one of the soundproof test rooms."

Izuku stared after her in shock as she walked away and for the first time noticed how much muscle tone she actually had. She'd handled that box like it was nothing, even though both he and Shinso had struggled. He supposed it made sense with how much heavy material she had to work with while inventing, but it was still really impressive...

"Are you just gonna keep staring at her butt all day," Kohaku asked dryly, looking up from her own invention, "or are you actually gonna help her?"

"I-I, uh," Izuku sputtered and turned bright red, "I wasn't...I didn't… umm…"

Deciding that it was best to just cut his losses, Izuku grabbed the box and hefted it as best he could before leaving his snickering classmates behind and following Mei and Shinso. Mei was already taking things

out of her box while Shinso was catching his breath and leaning against the wall. Izuku set his box down heavily next to the other two on the table and started shaking out his arms.

“That was…” Shinso looked at Mei, “Is she *actually* human? Or is she just some robot that killed its creator and started updating itself while pretending to be human?”

“Oooh!” Mei grinned. “If I…”

“No, Mei-chan.” Izuku said patiently. “You can’t make yourself into a cyborg.”

Mei deflated, then brightened and was about to say something, but Izuku interrupted her before she could say what he *knew* she was going to say, “You can’t make Shinso into a cyborg either.”

Mei pouted, “It’d be a great way to get around that stupid one support item only rule that the gen-ed students have. And how is he gonna beat the hero course if he can’t even lift a box?”

“Hey!” Shinso straighted up. “I lifted it! I did better than Midoriya anyway.”

“Izu-kun is an analyst.” Mei-chan said. “He can afford to be a weakling.”

“Thanks.” Izuku deadpanned, then frowned thoughtfully. “But in all seriousness, it would probably be a good idea for you to take up some sort of physical training, Shinso. Your quirk will probably keep you out of most fights, but there’s always times that a hero has to rely on their body more than their quirk. Take Eraserhead, for example! He’s such a great hero because of his martial arts training, not just his ability to cancel quirks!”

“You like Eraserhead?” Shinso asked. “I’ve never met someone else who liked him. Most people I talked to before UA just thought I was making him up.”

“Oh, he’s one of my favorites!” Izuku grinned. “Did you hear he’s one of the teachers here?! Have you seen him yet?”

“No, I’ve been looking everywhere, hoping to catch a glimpse of him in the halls, but I haven’t had any luck.” Shinso frowned. “I guess he’s just *that* good at stealth, huh?”

“I mean, you kinda have to be to avoid the media as a professional hero.” Izuku said. “What do you think…”

“Experiments now, fanboying later.” Mei said, popping between them with a large metal mask in one hand and three pairs of protective earmuffs in the other. “Put these on!”

Izuku put one of the earmuffs around his neck as Mei helped Shinso into the mask, “If you want, we could probably use one of the school’s gyms to work out and try to gain some strength before the sports festival.”

Shinso raised an eyebrow at him, “We?”

Izuku shrugged and stretched out his arms, “I sit in front of a screen all day, I’ve been getting sore. Everywhere online says that adding some physical activity into my schedule will help with that. Plus, I can’t just call Mei-chan every time I need to move something heavy.”

“I’m sure she’d be more than happy to open all the jars for you.” Shinso smirked.

“Nope, too busy!” Mei said. “Now Extra-Credit-Kun, stand on the other side of that plexiglass and yell.”

Shinso’s eyes widened, “Yell?!”

Mei grinned and nodded, “We need a baseline for volume!”

“Ok…” Shinso walked across the room and waited until both Mei and Izuku had put on their earmuffs before taking a deep breath and yelling as loudly as he could, shaking the room. Mei took a few notes, looking at an instrument in her hands that Izuku had no idea what it was or how to read it, but assumed it told her something about the decibels or volume or whatever.

She pulled one side of her earmuffs away from her, prompting Izuku and Shinso to do the same, “Ok, Extra-Credit-Kun, now try to brainwash Izu-kun!”

Shinso nodded and turned to Izuku, “What’s your favorite food?”

“Katsudon.”

Izuku waited for the familiar feeling of Shinso’s quirk to wash over him, but instead, after a few seconds, Shinso just shook his head, “I

can't make the connection. Is this mask electronically transmitting my voice?"

"Yes." Mei said. "Is that a problem?"

"It must be a problem with quirk transmission." Izuku said. "Whatever establishes the connection is carried on the voice itself, so having a speaker probably blocks that part. Is that right?"

When Shinso nodded, Mei took another prototype from one of the boxes and handed it to Shinso, "Ok! Mask baby 2.0! This should magnify your voice without need for a speaker!"

"And you just have this?" Shinso asked.

"We knew that might be a risk." Izuku responded. "And Mei enjoyed the challenge."

"It's not as advanced as my other babies." Mei said. "But for now, it should amplify your voice and I can modify it later to act as a voice changer! Now go yell!"

Shinso walked back behind the plexiglass and screamed, making Izuku wince, even with his earmuffs. Mei wrote something down, then gestured for him to do it again. When he finished, Izuku felt like his ears were still ringing...or wait, was that something else?

He held up a hand to signal Shinso to stop and took off his earmuffs, "Do you guys hear anything?"

"I'm wearing earmuffs in a soundproof room." Shinso deadpanned. "The only thing I can hear is my own thoughts."

Izuku frowned but listened closer, and, sure enough he could still hear something coming from outside, "Do you hear that, Mei-chan?"

Mei nodded, "It sounds like alarms."

The three of them hurried to the door and opened it, only to be blasted with the sound of blaring alarms and flashing lights. The classroom was already empty, and their classmates were nowhere to be found.

"They must have assumed we heard the alarm." Mei said. "Or they tried knocking on the door and we didn't hear them."

"Did we cause the alarm to go off?!" Izuku was panicking. "I didn't

think we were being that loud, but if something went wrong and I mean, sound can cause damage, look at Present Mic! Are we going to get in trouble?! What if they never let us near a test room again? What if they expel…"

"They're not going to be mad at us for setting off an alarm, Izu-kun!" Mei groaned. "And I don't think this was us anyway. It would have taken at least twice as much noise to trigger the auditory attack defense system.

"Should we leave?" Shinso asked. "I don't want to be here if that's a fire alarm."

"But my babies!" Mei said. "I can't just leave them!"

"Mei…" Whatever Izuku was about to say was cut off by the alarms going silent. "Or not."

The PA system crackled to life and Nedzu's cheery voice filtered through the speakers, "Hello students, the threat has been handled! Please calmly return to class!"

"Alright, then!" Mei said, pushing both boys back in the soundproof room. "Back to testing!'

Izuku thought it was odd that there was an alarm in the middle of the day, and what had Nedzu meant by *threat?* He meant to look into it later, he really did, but then Mei started another round of experiments, and he completely forgot.

Anomalies

Chapter Summary

> Izuku notices something odd on the cameras as he watches class 1A.

Chapter Notes

> Sorry this is a day late. I'm still alive, just suffering with writers block.
> I've been looking forward to writing these next few chapters since before the beginning of the story!

Izuku sharpened his pencils and separated the notebooks he'd dedicated to class 1A. He didn't really think he'd learn anything new about their quirks today, since they were just doing a special rescue lesson, but it *would* be interesting to see how they applied their quirks in an non-combat oriented situation. He was particularly excited to see how Katsuki reacted to being confronted with a problem that he couldn't punch.

Izuku glanced at the clock. The class would be arriving in just a few minutes, assuming that no one had any issues getting into their costumes or anything, so he went ahead and opened up the camera feeds to get a visual of Thirteen already waiting inside. Their quirk was so amazing! Izuku made a mental note that he needed to get their autograph sometime, maybe after the sports festival?

Since the students hadn't arrived yet, Izuku figured he might as well use the time to familiarize himself with the facility. It was so cool! There were all sorts of different terrain that simulated different disasters that the students would have to deal with as pro heroes, and from his place inside the system, Izuku could easily see all the different controls for each of the zones. At any point, Thirteen, Nedzu or whoever was teaching could easily turn off any of the disaster zones if anything went wrong, or even turn them up or control them almost like a video game to offer their students more of a challenge. They'd all been set to the lowest *automatic disaster* setting for the first years, obviously, but Izuku knew he'd be asking Nedzu if he could observe one of the third years' rescue exercises so he could see the building's full potential. It was so cool!

Movement on one of his screens caught his eye as the bus finally

arrived and the students started to file off following a grumpy Eraserhead like a line of little ducklings. Izuku snickered to himself. Maybe there was a way he could make sure Katsuki heard that? It would be sure to piss him off.

The last student left the bus, Izuku checked the schedule. Wasn't All Might supposed to be there today? As Thirteen lectured the students on quirk safety, Izuku hummed thoughtfully and pulled out his phone to check the news. Mei had called him to ramble about a new idea, right as he was about to get on the train, so he hadn't had a chance to read the headlines that morning like he unusually did.

Sure enough, All Might was all over the news, which meant that he must already be either near or over his limit for the day. Izuku couldn't really fault him, since those people obviously needed to be saved and being their hero was All Might's job, but he had been really looking forward to seeing his favorite hero perform rescue exercises just like his debut! Even if he wouldn't *actually* be in the same room, it still would have been really cool to watch something like that live.

With the mystery of All Might's absence solved, Izuku turned his attention back to the screens in front of him, where Thirteen was finishing up their lecture as a blackish-purple ...something… started to appear behind them. Izuku frowned and zoomed in to get a closer look. He hadn't seen any obstacles like that in the system, but it was possible he'd missed something…

Suddenly, every single camera cut out at the exact same time.

Izuku immediately attacked his keyboard, desperately trying to convince himself that there was no reason to panic. It must just be a weird electrical glitch or something! There was no way that that purple thing was a villain trying to attack the students, right? But, even if it *was* an electrical glitch, there was a failsafe on another electrical system that would trigger the alarms if a certain number of cameras stopped working, and that alarm wasn't going off. No alarms were.

After a minute of trying to get the cameras back up, Izuku hesitantly stood up and left his desk. It was probably nothing. UA's security was the best of the best! But it still wouldn't hurt to have Powerloader call Thirteen and make sure everything was alright, right? It was completely unnecessary and would probably annoy them, because there was *definitely not* a villain attack happening right now, but just in case there was…

Izuku slowly approached Powerloader's desk, only to find him talking to Hanzou. He didn't want to interrupt him while he was helping another student, but there might be an attack happening right now!

"Um, Powerloader?"

"Hmm, Midoriya?" Powerloader nodded to him, "I'll be with you in just a minute."

Izuku took a deep breath. The longer he thought about it, the more the whole situation just seemed *wrong.* He familiarized himself with the USJ, and there was nothing that was like that purple thing. Now was definitely not the time to let his social anxiety get the better of him.

"Actually, sir," Izuku tried to inject as much urgency as he could, hoping Powerloader would get the message without making the class panic, "I need you to check something out. *Now."*

Powerloader looked at him strangely, "Hanzu, just keep working. I'm going to see what Midoriya needs and I'll be back in a minute…"

When Hazou shrugged good-naturedly, Izuku walked back to his workroom as quickly as he could without running, grateful beyond belief that Powerloader was so different from his middle school teachers and trusted him without asking too many questions. It was nice and he would probably be crying if he wasn't so worried.

A part of him half-expected the cameras to be working again when he got back to his computer, making his entire anxiety attack an embarrassing overreaction, but of course, all of his screens were still blank. Izuku waited for Powerloader to follow him in before closing the door.

"Alright Midoriya, what is this about?" Powerloader asked. "It's not like you to interrupt like that. Mei, yes, obviously. But not…"

"I lost contact with the USJ." Izuku blurted out.

Powerloader froze, "I'm sorry, could you repeat that?"

"I was watching 1A over the cameras and everything was fine, but then there was this purple thing and the cameras just stopped working! I couldn't find anything like that in the system and there should be alarms going off but there's not and…" Izuku forced himself to stop rambling and took a deep breath. "I think it might be a villain

attack."

Powerloader took a sharp intake of breath, "It's All Might, Thirteen, and Eraserhead there today, right?"

Izuku shook his head, "Thirteen and Eraserhead are there, but All Might's already at his limit. Um…is there any way you could call them? Just to make sure everything's alright?"

Powerloader was already pulling out his phone, "Why am I not surprised that you know about that? I'm sure everything's fine…this'll just take a minute."

Izuku held his breath as the phone rang. After a long minute, Powerloader took the phone from his ear and dialed another number, "Eraser sometimes doesn't answer the phone, you know how he is, he thinks it's a waste of time, but Thirteen should have their phone on them."

Powerloader's face grew more and more worried as the phone continued ringing with no answer until he finally put it away, "I need to report this to Nedzu."

Izuku gulped and sat down at his desk, pulling his keyboard toward him. So it *was* an attack then, "I'll try to reconnect with the cameras and keep you updated."

Powerloader nodded stiffly and left, only to return a second later with a small box that he set down on the desk in front of him, "Have you ever used a comm link before?"

Izuku shook his head and Powerloader took one out and handed it to him, "Ok, channel control is right on the side there, just tune it to channel three and you'll be able to talk to any of the teachers once they turn their comms on. It's an open line, so we should be able to hear everything. Do you understand?"

Izuku set up the comm like Powerloader had told him and put it in his ear, then nodded. Powerloader returned the gesture before throwing open the door to the lab, "Hanzou, as class rep, I'm leaving you in charge. Make sure nobody blows anything up."

There were some groans and exclamations, but Powerloader didn't pay attention to any of them as he closed the door to the workroom and left the lab as quickly as he could. Izuku distantly noted that he didn't run either. So they didn't want to cause a panic at the main

school then. Ok, cool. His fingers flew over the keyboard as he started troubleshooting the cameras. He had only been at it a few minutes when the PA system crackled to life, but Izuku barely noticed the announcement.

“All teachers please report to the front office immediately. Again, all teachers to the front office.”

There was a small string of code that seemed to be repeating and it looked almost like it could be a technology quirk of some kind that was blocking the signals. Izuku felt torn, on the one hand, having a quirk involved meant that it was almost definitely villains, but on the other, Izuku *knew* quirks. All he had to do was find the quirk’s weakness and exploit it.

“Midoriya?” Powerloader’s voice echoed in his earpiece. “Are you still there?”

“Yes, sir.” Izuku didn’t stop working, even as the other teachers started talking.

“Wait, the little listener’s on the comm link?” That was Present Mic’s voice, he knew it well enough from listening to his radio show for years.

“Young Midoriya’s here?” All Might asked.

It seemed like Nedzu was ignoring all of them, since he addressed Izuku next, “Have you had any luck in re-establishing contact with the USJ facility?”

“Not yet, sir.” Izuku said distractedly. “But it *is* a technology quirk and...Yes!”

“Do you have a visual?” Powerloader asked.

“What?” Izuku’s brain took a moment to catch up. “Oh, no, not yet, but I figured out how the blocking quirk works. It seems to only be blocking a specific type of signal. I mean, that’s obviously what our cameras are using, but I might be able to jury rig things from my side and use another type of signal to connect.”

“Alright.” Nedzu said. “Do that and tell us immediately when you get through.”

Izuku felt a small surge of pride. Nedzu had said *when,* not *if.* He

believed in him!

He shook his head. No time to think about that right now. Right now he needed to make sure that the teachers weren't going into this fight blind. It took him a few minutes to hack his way through, but he'd already tried hacking UA twice now, so he knew how all the systems worked and with the extra permissions that Nedzu had given him, Izuku had just barely enough experience and authority to do what he had in mind. He hit one final key, the cameras flared to life again, and Izuku didn't like what he saw.

Those were definitely villains.

"Nedzu, I have a visual."

"What's the situation?"

"Students have been scattered throughout the facility." Izuku reported. "Eraserhead is fighting, but he's outnumbered. There are dozens of them...mostly low level though, it looks like. Thirteen is by the entrance protecting some of the students. They seem to be in a stalemate with one of the villains, probably the one responsible for the purple thing I saw before the cameras cut out, considering they seem to be made of some kind of purple mist."

Izuku didn't know how he was so composed considering that *there was a villain attack happening and oh god, people might die* , but he supposed he was just too busy to panic. Or maybe he was channeling his panic into focus? That made sense.

Suddenly, the stalemate between Thirteen and the villain broke.

"Thirteen is down!" Izuku yelled. "I repeat, Thirteen is down!"

He heard several of the teachers swear over the line, but he was too busy starting at the screen to respond. Thirteen...were they even going to survive that attack? Is this what villains really did? Izuku felt so powerless. He wasn't even there! He couldn't even do anything to help them!

"There's a physical limit to how fast we can go…" Hound Dog growled.

All Might sounded worried, "Maybe I should…"

"No." Izuku started scanning the cameras again. "You're already at

your limit. If you use what little you have left to get there, you're not going to have enough energy left to fight the villains. The students are holding their own for now. The one that hurt Thirteen has a warp quirk and turned their quirk against them. It was a lucky shot, and it won't work against most of the students."

"But…"

"Midoriya is correct." Nedzu said. "If there is a warp quirk, there might be other powerful quirks as well. The students need you to be as close to full strength as possible. Eraserhead is still there and the villains don't know that we know of the attack, so it's better to go as fast as *humanly* possible for now. Midoriya, let us know if anything changes."

"Will do."

Izuku felt so useless! There had to be something he could do! It might help the heroes if he could figure out why the heroes were there…and for that he needed audio. Izuku used the same hack he'd used on the cameras and started eavesdropping on the various villain's conversations, switching the microphones rapidly as he tried to overhear anything useful.

"…didn't tell me the plan, kid I swear!" One of the villain's was caught in Todoroki's ice quirk. "All they told me was that they're gonna kill All Might! That's all I know."

Izuku switched mics again as Todoroki started unthawing the villain. Not…the most hero-like, but then again, neither was hacking, so he couldn't talk, "They're here to kill All Might. I don't know why or how yet."

There was a villain near where Eraserhead was fighting, but he almost seemed to be supervising instead of fighting himself. Izuku switched to one of the mics near him as the villain started scratching at his neck. A stress response?

"When's the final boss gonna get here?" The villain's voice was raspy as he muttered to himself. "We're running out of NPCs!"

So…immature? It was hard to tell how old the villain was, but considering that he called his own men NPCs, he was almost definitely the leader. Probably antisocial, considering the video game references…final boss must be All Might. Did he know that the heroes were on their way? No, then he would have said something about *final*

bosses or even *mini bosses,* but he didn't, so he was probably thinking that All Might was just late…

Still, the video game references gave him an idea.

Now that he'd done it twice, it didn't take Izuku all that long to hack into each of the different zones. Within minutes, he had the weapons of artificial flooding, earthquake simulators, flamethrowers and so much more at his fingertips. With Eraserhead slowing down, he had to do everything in his power to make sure that the students were safe.

"Alright villain, you wanna treat this like a game?" Izuku stretched his hands out in front of him, popping his knuckles. "Then let's play."

Dust and Ashes

Chapter Summary

Izuku changes up the levels.

Chapter Notes

Some epic fanart from ParanoidPug!

“Alright villain, you wanna treat this like a game? Then let’s play.”

Nedzu felt a thrill at his protege's words and couldn’t help the sharp smile that came to his face even as his coworkers shivered. He wasn’t 100% sure what had prompted the challenge, since Midoriya’s near constant muttering had trailed off after giving a passing analysis of who *appeared* to be the villain’s leader, but whatever was about to happen, it was sure to be simply *marvelous!*

Nedzu had never been more grateful than he was at that moment for his protoge’s mumbling habit. For never having received any training when it came to the *man in chair* position, as it was often fondly called, Midoriya was doing remarkably well! When he addressed his comments to the heroes, Nedzu noted that he was trying to pick the largest threats and most relevant details to mention, all while keeping his head and hacking through the system. Whatever small details his student happened to leave out were covered by his unintentional mutterings, so it all worked out. Nedzu had been a tad concerned when Midoriya had identified the glitch as the effects of a technopathic quirk, but it turned out that his worry was unfounded, as his student had bypassed even that challenge with little issue.

He was so proud.

“He...he sounds so confident.” All Might noted quietly.

“He should.” Midnight whispered back. “He beat a technology quirk from *inside* the system.”

“And if it wasn’t for him, we’d wouldn’t know about the attack at all.” Present Mic looked slightly pale, most likely wondering if the next thing Midoriya reported would be his husband’s murder. Never having had interest in romantic connections himself, Nedzu couldn’t even imagine what he must be going through. All they could do now,

however, was get there as quickly as possible and trust Midoriya to handle the rest.

Izuku checked the cameras to make sure Eraserhead was still going strong before turning his attention to the students. The plaza wasn't a disaster zone, so he didn't have nearly enough control of it to do anything useful and if Eraserhead were here with him, he'd probably insist that Izuku help the students first.

Prioritize the rescue.

The students in the shipwreck zone seemed to be in the most immediate danger. There were just two students, a girl with a frog quirk and a boy with adhesive hair-balls, if Izuku remembered correctly. The frog girl could probably jump to safety with little issue, but the boy was panicking too much for her to do anything without leaving him behind, something that wasn't helped by the fact that the ship was *literally sinking.* It must have been one of the villains' quirks that damaged it and...yep, they all had quirks that took advantage of the water.

"Ok, easy enough." Izuku muttered. "Let's just see how useful your quirks are without any water."

Izuku hit a key and the pool started draining. It was slow going at first and Izuku was almost worried that the water level wouldn't go down fast enough to do any good, until he noticed that one of the drain settings was labeled *whirlpool.*

"Hmm," Izuku clicked on it, "I wonder what that does…"

It was as if the gates of hell had opened up beneath the villains as the water began to vortex down the drain. The villains were yelling, accusing one another of manipulating the water and creating enough general confusion that the frog girl was able to grab the ball boy by the waist and jump them both to safety. As they passed overhead, the boy started throwing his balls at the villain in a panic. Izuku almost wanted to facepalm. What kind of idiot thought it was a good idea to call attention to himself during a villain attack?

It ended up working out even better than Izuku could have hoped for, though, since the balls followed the flow of the water and brushed up against the villains, making them stick to each other. By the time the two students had reached the relative safety of the shore, the pool was almost entirely empty and the villains had somehow formed a ball of

bodies that would be almost impossible to escape unless those balls somehow lost their stickiness, which according to Izuku's analysis of the ball boy's quirk, wouldn't be happening anytime soon.

One zone down...a lot of others to go.

Todoroki seemed to have things handled in the landslide zone, and Katsuki would probably just get mad if he received any help in the ruin zone, so that left the fire zone, the downpour zone, and the mountain zone for Izuku to choose from…

"Izu-kun!"

He startled as Mei slammed the door to his workroom open, "Hanzou is a boring class rep! He won't even let me make a *little* fire!"

"Not now Mei-chan." Izuku said distractedly. The kid with a tail quirk...Ojiro? He was fighting alone in the fire zone and there was a guy approaching him from behind.

Mei came up behind him, "Is that…?"

"The USJ." Izuku took control of one of the flamethrowers and turned it up to high. Ojiro whirled around as he heard the villain scream, but couldn't waste too much time figuring out what had happened, since another villain was already running toward him, using some kind of telekinesis to control the flames. "It was supposed to be a standard rescue exercise for 1A, but…"

Mei was silent for a long moment as Izuku cut off all the fire within fifty feet of Ojiro and his current opponent. The villain's eyes widened in shock as his entire weapon supply disappeared before he could blink, but Ojrio was the first to recover, using his tail like a whip to knock the guy out.

"What can I do to help?"

Izuku glanced over at his best friend, surprised to see her looking serious for one of the first times since he'd met her. It would have been enough to creep him out if he couldn't see the familiar gleam of determination and passion in her eyes as they quickly zoomed in and out, flicking rapidly between the different screens as she took in every detail.

"Close the door. We don't want the other students panicking."

As Mei complied, he turned his attention back to the fire zone. Ojiro had started running after he took out his last opponent, but he obviously didn't know where he was going, because he was just running deeper and deeper into the maze.

He sensed Mei behind him again, so he jerked his head toward the extra chair sitting against the wall and slid over to give her room to sit beside him. With one hand, Izuku grabbed one of the earpieces from the box Powerloader had left on his desk, and with the other, he created a wall of flames right in Ojiro's path to force him to turn tail. Good, he was heading in the right direction now.

Izuku threw the comm to Mei right as she sat down, "Channel three, controls are one the side. I've already gotten access to the disaster zones and the teachers are on their way, so we just need to keep the students alive until they get there."

Mei grinned as she plugged in another keyboard and pulled it toward her, "So I *do* get to make explosions?"

Izuku couldn't help smiling back, "As many as you want. Here, you can have the fire and downpour zones. I've been using the fire to guide Ojiro, that's the student with the tail, to the exit. I don't know how the ones in the downpour zone are doing…"

"Just leave it to me, Izu-kun!" Mei cackled, using a flamethrower to keep Ojrio from turning down a dead end. "This is *so* much more fun than listening to the class rep!"

"Midoriya," Powerloader somehow managed to sound both amused and exasperated, "did you really need to give Hatsume access to *more* dangerous experiments?"

"Oh!" Mei exclaimed, "Are those the teachers?! Hi, Powerloader!"

"If she handles two of the zones, I can focus on the mountain zone and the plaza." Izuku explained simply. "Don't worry, Mei-chan knows destruction better than almost anyone I know!"

Powerloader groaned, "That's what I'm worried about…"

Izuku turned his attention to the mountain zone just in time to see the girl with the earphone jack quirk, Jiro, push the electricity boy in the path of one of the villains, which didn't make any sense until the villain went down. Izuku rolled his eyes as the electricity boy gave the girls a confident thumbs up..was his name Kaminari? Anyway, how

much control did Izuku have? A full earthquake would mess up the students as well, so he should try to avoid that, but…ah, that would work.

As a villain swung to attack the creation quirk quirk girl…Midnight had totally helped design that costume, hadn't she? Whatever, not important right now. Just as the villain was about to land a hit, he found himself launched into the air as a pillar of rock suddenly popped up out of the ground directly beneath him. Izuku grinned. The teachers probably used this feature mostly to change the landscape and give upperclassmen a variety of landscapes and obstacles without having to constantly rely on Cemontoss's quirk, but he could use it to…well, quite literally trip up the invaders, considering that he'd raised up a small ledge and made one of the villains fall flat on their face as they ran toward Jiro.

Keeping one eye on the mountain zone, Izuku glanced over toward the plaza, "Nedzu, is there anything I can use in the plaza? The only thing I see is the fountain, but that doesn't seem like it's going to be very useful and I don't think the villains have noticed yet, but Eraserhead is starting to slow down."

There was a soft gasp on the other end of the line, but Izuku couldn't tell which of the teachers it was from. Vaguely, Izuku was aware that one the mountain zone villains had popped up out of the ground and was making his way toward the plaza as well. Finally, Nedzu spoke up, "There's not any disaster simulators there, but every building on campus has defense systems if you can access them."

"Alright, weapons." Izuku muttered and poked around for a moment, "Perfect, found them."

"Good." Nedzu said. "Now, be aware that most of the fire power is not as…precise as this situation requires, and that the more lethal options might take a few minutes to warm up. Be careful, Midoriya."

Izuku nodded, his throat suddenly very dry, "O-ok. Um, that's a lot of pressure."

"Says the kid who's already started fighting back." Hound Dog growled. "Don't overthink it kid. Just do your best and save who you can. Everything else will have to come later."

Izuku glanced at Mei, who nodded at him firmly, and he felt a flood of determination take over him. "Yes sir! I'll do my best!"

He took a moment to look over his weapons options, deciding to use the guns only as a last resort. It looked like the best option he had was some kind of weighted net. He shot one experimentally at a knot of villains that was standing far enough away from the fight that Izuku didn't have to worry about hitting Eraserhead. The net hit the group head on, and instantly, all action stopped as everyone in the plaza turned to look and tried to figure out where the net had come from. The leader started scratching at his neck again.

After his initial success, Izuku was feeling a little more confident, so aimed another net at the leader. If he could trap him, then…

Izuku fired, only for the net to disappear into a purple portal right before it hit it's target. Another portal appeared near Eraserhead and the net came flying out, forcing him to dodge. Izuku grimaced, "Sorry. My bad."

The warp villain appeared next to the leader, looking quite a bit worse for wear from his fight with the students at the entrance. Izuku noticed a few purple balls stuck to the armor on his neck, along with chunks of concrete, so the two students from the shipwreck zone must have made it to the entrance and helped with the fight there. The two villains seemed to be talking, so Izuku scrambled to access the audio from the plaza, turning it up loud enough for both him and Mei to hear the conversation.

"…allowed one of the students to escape, Shigaraki." The warp villain's voice was deep and smooth. It would almost be calming if it didn't belong to a villain. "He will almost definitely raise the alarm, which means that the heroes will be here soon."

Izuku glanced over at the cameras for the entrance. Which student had escaped? Oh, that was perfect.

"The kid with the engine quirk escaped." Izuku told the teachers. "He should be heading your way now."

"Good." Nedzu said. "That means that the villains won't be expecting us so quickly. Notify us if anything else changes."

"Yes sir."

The leader was scratching his neck hard enough to bleed, "If you weren't our escape route, Kurogiri, I'd dust you right now! And tell me, why is the information we got so far off? I was told this would be a mob raid, so how come this level is acting like a tower defense?!?!"

Izuku gulped. They'd noticed his interference. He shook his head and forced himself to focus on the hints of the leader's quirk. He'd said something about dust, so did he have a quirk that allowed for dust manipulation? If so, Izuku would need to limit destruction in the plaza…

The villain that Izuku had seen escape from the mountain zone stepped between the two leaders and interrupted their conversation, "We have a problem. I don't know *how,* because I haven't deactivated my quirk since I stepped through the portal, but someone from the outside got through and seems to be using the building to fight back."

The lead villain, Shigaraki, if Izuku had heard correctly, suddenly stilled, "So, what you're saying is that someone is using cheat codes?"

"Um…"

The warp villain, Kurogiri apparently, interrupted the blocker's confusion with an air of professionality, "I don't suppose there's a way to tell where the interference is coming from? A set of coordinates would be most appreciated."

Shigaraki whirled to pin the blocker with a manic stare, only partially visible behind the creepy hand that the villain was using as a mask, "Yes! Tell us where the cheater is! Now!"

Izuku forgot how to breath and he could barely hear Mei's gasp beside him as she moved to crush his hand. If they figured out they were at the main school, they could warp to get them, which would put the rest of the student body in danger! The teachers were all gone to handle the attack, and if the location of the attack changed, they wouldn't be able to get here in time…

The blocker took a hesitant step back and raised his hands nervously, "That...that's not how my quirk works! I can block certain kinds of electronic signals, but I'm not a tracker! Even if I could track the interference like that, I'd end up with an IP address, which doesn't necessarily tell you where the computer is physically located!"

Shigaraki took his hand away from his neck and spread his fingers, "Then what are you even good for?"

Before Izuku could even react, Shigaraki lunged and gripped the blocker's face. A strangled scream left the man's mouth before it was cut off as first his mouth, then his vocal cords, then his lungs disintegrated under the villain's touch. Within thirty seconds, the only

thing left of the blocker was a pile of bones, blood, and…

“Dust.” Izuku breathed.

Decisions

Chapter Summary

The USJ continues to fight back.

“Midoriya?” Present Mic’s voice, much less exuberant than normal, brought him back to the present and Izuku looked over at Mei, who looked like she was about to throw up. How long had they been sitting there? “Are you and the other little listener ok? You went quiet there. And what was that about dust?”

“Uh,” Izuku swallowed the bile that was starting to climb up his throat, “The, leader…his quirk…he just killed…it’s my fault…”

There was a panicked flurry of noise on the other end of the comm, but the white noise in Izuku’s brain was louder. He’d never seen someone *die* before. If it wasn’t for Izuku’s interference, would Shigaraki still have killed that guy? Probably not, so it was all Izuku’s fault that he was dead.

“Slow down, Young Midoriya.” All Might’s voice wasn’t quite the same as it was when he was in his hero form, but it still brought back enough memories of long hours in front of the computer to be slightly comforting. “Start from the beginning. First off, is Eraserhead all right?”

“W-what?” Izuku looked at the screen helplessly. Even though it seemed like the world had stopped for him, the fight was still going. Eraserhead was still slowly being overwhelmed by the cannon fodder as Shigaraki and Kurogiri watched impassively, as if they hadn’t just casually left a body in the middle of the plaza.

“Eraserhead is fine.” Mei reported, apparently recovering from the shock a little quicker than Izuku had been able to. “The villain killed one of his own men.”

“He killed him because of me, Mei-chan.” Izuku’s voice cracked. “That man is dead because of me.”

Mei looked at him, the emotions in her eyes swirling between pity, helplessness, and something else that Izuku couldn't' name, “I know, but they’re gonna kill a lot more people if we do nothing.”

Izuku took a deep breath and let it out slowly before addressing the teachers and throwing himself into his analysis. He could deal with... *everything* later, “The leader’s name is Shigaraki. He has a disintegration quirk that seems to spread from wherever he touches. Most likely a five point activation quirk, just like Uraraka’s gravity nullification. Unknown whether he can control the speed with which something turns to dust. The warp quirk user’s name is Kurogiri and he appears to be the right hand, also more mature than Shigaraki. All other villains are most likely hired muscle.”

Izuku still didn’t want to use the guns that Nedzu had mentioned, but he went into the defense system and started booting them up anyway. If Shigaraki was willing to kill so easily, Izuku had to be prepared. Mei was right, all he could worry about right now was making sure Shigaraki didn’t kill anyone else.

“Mei-chan, you take over the mountain zone.” Izuku said. “I need to focus on the plaza.”

“Will do, Izu-kun!” Mei turned toward the screen and her eyes widened. “Oh my god!”

“What?” Izuku turned to check what was wrong, only to end up with Mei’s hands over his eyes. “Mei-chan! What are you doing? I can’t see!”

“What’s going on over there?” Powerloader demanded. “Kids!”

“We’re fine, Powerloader-sensei!” Mei yelled. “It’s just that Izu-kun doesn’t need to see that!”

“I literally just saw someone *die,* Mei-chan.” Izuku grumbled. “What’s worse than that?”

“Well, it’s just that...” Mei-s voice sounded embarrassed, “One of the girls in the mountain zone had a...costume malfunction...”

“I knew that costume was going to be a problem.” Izuku grumbled, “Her quirk works through skin-exposure Mei-chan, it’s not a big deal. If I promise not to look, can I have my eyes back?”

“Hatsume, please.” Present Mic sounded somewhat desperate. “Midoriya needs to help Shouta..”

“Oh!” Mei snatched her hands back as if she’d just been burned, “I...I’m so sorry, I wasn’t thinking and…”

“Sometimes trauma is like that.” Hounddog interrupted patiently. “Experiences like this make the brain want to cling to any sense of normalcy it can get. Honestly, you kids are first years and aren’t even in the hero course, you shouldn’t be going through *any* of this…”

“If we weren’t involved, you still wouldn’t know about the attack.” Izuku said resolutely. “We’re fine. Crap, Shigaraki’s on the move.”

Izuku turned up the volume so he could hear Shigaraki’s muttering, “…24 seconds, then 20, then 17…”

It took a moment for Izuku to make the connection, and when it did, he couldn’t help feeling like he’d somehow gotten caught in Todoroki’s ice quirk, “He’s figured out Eraserhead’s tell.”

Eraserhead tensed and jumped away from Shigaraki as he ran forward and Izuku sighed in relief, “I was worried for a second that Eraserhead had been too busy to see Shigaraki’s quirk in action, but he’s keeping his distance, so he’s safe for now.”

“Eraserhead prides himself on having good situational awareness.” Nedzu said. “He wouldn’t be such an effective hero if he was unable to multitask.”

“I’ve gotten almost all of the students out of the disaster zones.” Mei reported. “Most of them are heading toward the entrance, but a few are trying to make their way toward the plaza.”

“Get in their way, please, Miss Hatsume.” Nedzu ordered. “We need to keep the students away from the most dangerous villains as much as possible.”

“But…”

“Hatsume…” Powerloader said her name like it was a warning, which it probably was, although Izuku had no idea what the punishment for disobedience would be. Most likely no access to flammable materials for a week.

“Fine, have it your way.” Mei huffed and started typing. Izuku glanced over to see Katsuki and Kirishima struggling to keep their feet as a mini-earthquake shook the path they were on. It wouldn’t hold them back for long, but he trusted Mei to keep them safe.

Turning back to his own screen, Izuku stopped breathing as he realized that Shigaraki had stopped the cat and mouse game he’d been

playing with Eraserhead and was now scratching his neck again. This couldn't be good.

"Stupid cheater." Shigaraki muttered. "If it wasn't for the stupid extra player with the cheat codes, I could have taken Easerhead out easily! His quirk isn't good for long drawn out battles with big groups…"

"No...good hero…" Eraserhead panted and shot his capture weapon toward Shigaraki, "...is a...one trick pony."

Kurogiri appeared beside Shigaraki and the capture weapon disappeared harmlessly into a portal, only to reappear at Eraserhead's ankles. Eraserhead rolled away and his hair started floating. The portals disappeared, cutting the capture weapon neatly in half as they closed. Izuku shivered slightly. If Kurogiri closed one of his portals while someone was halfway through...

"Would you like me to take care of him?" Kurogiri asked.

Shigaraki stopped scratching his neck and grinned widely enough that Izuku could see the expression behind the hand on his face, "No. Eraserhead might be cool, but he doesn't know that I'm not the final boss here! Nomu!"

Izuku didn't know how he'd missed the giant shadow that slammed Eraserhead into the ground, but if he'd thought about it at all, he would have assumed that the bird villain with an exposed brain was just another one of the thugs Shigaraki had hired.

He would have been wrong.

"What even is that thing?" Mei's voice raised in barely concealed panic and Izuku decided he didn't like it when she panicked. That was supposed to be *his* job.

"I...I don't know." Izuku stalled for a moment, ignoring the teachers barrage of questions on the other end of the comm as he analyzed the villain. "Everyone shut up!"

"Eraserhead is still alive." At least, Izuku hoped he was, but he could have sworn he'd seen the hero moving around a little, even after whatever that *thing* was had stopped beating him, "But the students are on their own now. He's not going to be able to fight anyone with those injuries. As for what attacked him...well, it doesn't seem human. It has a strength aspect to it's quirk, definitely, but it also seems to have some sort of bird mutation, which should normally come with

more fragile bones and diminished physical strength that this villain obviously hasn't shown signs of…"

Izuku trailed off as Shigaraki started speaking again. *Bragging,* his brain corrected.

"What do you think of him?" Shigaraki said gleefully. "He's the bioengineered anti-symbol of peace, but you can call him Nomu. He's got his own set of cheat codes to beat the big boss!"

"Bioengineered anti-symbol of peace?" Mei repeated, horrified. "That thing was invented? That's somebody's *baby?!"*

"Their back up is going to be coming soon. Between the student that escaped and that noob with the cheat codes, it's game over." Shigaraki growled, and brought his hand up to start scratching his neck again, only to freeze right before he made contact. "How about we leave the symbol of peace a present to break his pride when he gets here!"

He lunged toward Eraserhead, but Izuku was already ready. He shot every weapon he could think of at the space between Shigaraki and the hero, but apparently Kurogiri was already expecting his attack. Each of the rockets, bullets and other projectiles he's launched were effortlessly redirected upwards, harmlessly exploding near the ceiling. Portions of the dome shattered from the shrapnel and bullets, and the remaining thugs ran for cover as shards started raining down, but even falling glass wasn't enough to stop Shigaraki from grabbing Eraserhead's face just like he had grabbed the blocker earlier. Mei and Izuku both held their breath as all five of Shigaraki's fingers made contact.

Nothing happened.

"You really are so cool, Eraserhead." Shigaraki grinned. At least he seemed to respect Eraserhead as an opponent, not that that would be enough to keep him alive. "Nomu!"

Izuku had already launched another net at the Nomu, hoping to cancel his quirk in time to soften the blow, making sure to shoot a rocket at Kurogiri at the same time in an attempt to distract him. The half-baked plan worked and the net wrapped around the monster, but even with the net canceling his quirk, the Nomu still slammed Eraserheads face into the concrete with an audible crack and the hero finally went completely limp. Shigaraki simply huffed and disintegrated the net like it was nothing before turning his attention back toward the now unconscious Eraserhead.

“How far out are you guys?” Izuku’s brain whirled with a million plans as he addressed the heroes.

“About five minutes.” Nedzu said. “But All Might could get there in two if…”

“Do it.” Izuku ordered. “Power up and get over there. I’ll distract them.”

“Izu-kun,” Mei warned, “don’t you dare…”

“Young Midoirya, I really must insist…” All Might’s voice overlapped Mei’s and the other heroes’ as they tried to stop him, but Izuku resolutely ignored them as he connected to the PA system.

Shigaraki froze with his hand only inches away from Eraserhead’s face as Izuku’s voice, slightly warped from both the technology and the acoustics of the building, echoed around the USJ.

“Hello!” He took a deep breath and forced a shaky smile onto his face in a poor attempt to both assure Mei and to make himself sound more confident, “You seem to be having a little trouble.”

Cheat Code

Chapter Summary

The conclusion of the USJ.

Chapter Notes

Kattrina123 made chibis for all my fics, so go check them out!

Shigaraki's entire body contorted in rage as he frantically looked around for whoever was speaking, "You're the cheater who switched up the levels! Who are you?"

Izuku looked to Mei, who was looking at him with wide eyes. There was no way he could tell Shigaraki his real name. The villain would be able to track him too easily and that would put Mom, Mei, even Katsuki's family in danger because Shigaraki could choose to target any of them to get to him. He also couldn't say he was *Deku* for many of the same reasons. He'd grown up with that nickname and it was way too strongly associated with Izuku Midoriya. It wouldn't take more than a few days of asking around to figure out who *Deku* really was, if Shigaraki asked the right people.

As his thoughts whirled, a memory of something that Shigaraki had said earlier popped into his mind and Izuku had to hold in a breathy sigh of relief.

"What kind of a question is that? You said it yourself, Shigaraki." For this to work, Izuku needed to be someone Shigaraki could respect. Someone confident and an opponent who he knew could counter him at every turn. He gave a cocky smile and leaned back in his chair, hoping to channel that same energy into his voice. "I'm Cheat Code."

Nedzu was beginning to understand Yamada's panic now.

He was torn between bursting with pride for his student's quick thinking and wanting to ground him until he was thirty for his recklessness. Why did he have to call attention to himself like that? The villains had a warp quirk for goodness sakes, what would happen if they simply warped over to the main campus and attacked Midoriya directly?! He was quirkless and didn't have any strength or training to defend himself with! Nedzu didn't want to lose his student before he'd

even really had a chance to teach him!

But now wasn't the time for panic, now was the time for his intelligence to shine. It was the time for damage control and protecting his reckless student from himself so that his reckless student could protect the other children from the villains. Was this what parenthood felt like?

"Everyone, please only refer to Midoriya as Cheat Code from now on." Nedzu ordered. "Especially when we arrive at the USJ. We don't want him to become a target."

"Yes sir." All Might's voice echoed over the comms. "Young Iida is heading your way, he tried to stop me, but I decided to leave him to you."

"Ah, I see the little listener now!" Yamada said.

Iida was kicking up dust as he headed their way almost slid as he saw the teachers and skidded quickly to a stop, "Teachers! There is an attack! I wanted to warn All Might, but he ignored…"

"We know, young'un. We done been told by…" Snipe trailed off and glanced at Nedzu, who shook his head. Snipe nodded resolutely, "by a third party. Come with us, you best give your report on the way."

For a moment, Nedzu thought that Iida would collapse in relief, but after a second, he squared his shoulders and started running back the way he had come as the teachers followed, "Yes sir!"

As Iida filled in the gaps and described the attack, Nedzu couldn't help but feel like they couldn't get there soon enough.

On screen, Shigaraki was attacking his neck like it had personally offended him, "Where are you, Cheat Code?! Tell me!"

"That's the way your warp quirk works, isn't it?" Izuku asked, his curiosity getting the better of him. "You can't come stop me if you don't actually know exactly where I am. That's why you were so angry when your signal blocker couldn't tell you my location."

"Iz...Cheat Code." Mei said softly. "I've unlocked the doors. Most of the students are evacuating now, but there are a couple overachievers I'm having to keep away from the plaza."

Izuku nodded in acknowledgement. Faintly over the comms, he heard the sound of people cheering and smiled. It had been two minutes.

“That’s the thing about having the cheat codes, Shigaraki.” Izuku said. “Not only can I change the levels, but the boss is on *my* side.”

“What the actual Goddamn fuck!” Bakugo growled as yet another wall collapsed in front of them, blocking their path for the fifth time in five minutes.

Eijiro was secretly relieved, “Dude, have you noticed that the walls only collapse if we try heading toward the fight? Maybe if we try heading toward the entrance…?”

“Shut up, Shitty hair!” Bakugo screamed. “I’m gonna take down their stupid escape route and a few walls aren’t gonna be enough to stop me!”

“But did you hear that dude on the intercom?” Eijiro asked. “This Cheat Code guy is probably doing this! He’s probably working with the teachers, so if we just leave…”

“I’m not gonna let some coward who won’t even show his face get in my way!” Bakugo yelled and exploded another piece of rubble so he could get through. “Now are you gonna help me or not?”

Eijiro instinctively hardened as an insane burst of wind pressure whipped through the USJ and he hoped he wasn’t imagining the booming voice that followed.

“I am here!”

Toshinori wasn’t smiling. The situation was just as bad as young Midoriya had made it out to be. A broken Aizawa was pinned under a massive villain that he assumed to be the Nomu that he had been warned of, so now, his main duty was to save his coworker. If only he’d been here!

Toshinori lunged forward, calling the full power of One for All into the punch. Dust whipped up from the force of the attack and Toshinori was just getting ready to grab Aizawa and get him out of there when he realized that the villain...no, the *monster,* hadn’t even budged.

“That’s not going to work, All Might!” A young man with dirty blue hair and a hand over his face cackled loudly, “Nomu has cheat codes of his own to kill the big boss! The only way you’re going to be able to beat him is to slowly gouge out his flesh, and I don’t think he’s going to let you do that!”

“Shock absorption.” Young Midoriya muttering echoed around the plaza. “But he had a strength...no super strength was never his quirk, was it? That’s why he was still able to hurt Eraserhead, even with the net, which should have blocked…”

“You’re not as smart as you like to pretend, Cheat Code!” The young man, who Toshinori realized must be Shigaraki, the leader, said gleefully, “Are you forgetting that Nomu is a mod? He doesn’t have to follow the rules!”

Toshinori really should read up on the teenagers lingo if this was how the next generation of villains were going to talk, because seriously, they might as well be speaking greek. All that he got from that was that Nomu was dangerous, but he’d already known that.

Young Midoriya’s observations, however, were much more useful.

“Shock absorption, huh?” Toshinori rushed the Nomu and grabbed him from behind, yanking him up and forcing him to let go of Aizawa. “Thanks for telling me how to beat him!”

He bent backwards, careful to avoid the unconscious Aizawa as he supplexed the villain into the ground. If he could just stop him from moving…

Ow...that couldn’t be good.

Izuku turned on some fans so that the dust would clear faster and he could get a clear visual of the fight. All Might had managed to get a hand on the Nomu, but unfortunately, the Nomu had also gotten a hand on him. Kurogiri had created a warp gate right where All Might had tried to bury the Nomu and created another one under All Might so the villain could grab him. The Nomu was digging his fingers into All Might’s side and had apparently managed to open his old scar, if the blood staining All Might’s shirt was any indication.

All Might desperately tried to pry the Nomu's hands away from his left side, but the angle was all wrong and Izuku still couldn’t get his mind off what Shigaraki had said about Nomu not following the rules. What

had he meant by that?

“Good work. Kurogiri!” Shigaraki grinned. “We’ve got him right where we want him now!”

“Normally, I wouldn’t want blood dirtying the inside of my warp gates.” Kurogiri said calmly. “But for a hero such as yourself, I am willing to make an exception.”

Izuku’s eyes widened as he realized what their plan was. The Nomu was strong, so if he was able to pull All Might halfway through the portal...Izuku couldn’t let that happen, but what could he…?

He muted his connection to the USJ’s PA system, “Nedzu, how far out are you?”

“We can see the building.” Nedzu said. “We’ll be there momentarily.”

Izuku’s mind raced as he thought about the quirks they had available, “Is Iida still with you?”

“Yes, he is.” Present Mic said. “But we were about to send him to check on the other little listeners.”

“Alright. Here’s what you need to do.” Izuku kept an eye on the plaza, where Shigaraki seemed to be taking his time toying with All Might before killing him. “Cementoss, liquify the cement under your feet so you can slide easily and have Iida use his quirk to push you to the USJ and get you there faster. If you can harden it right after you’ve passed so Iida doesn’t have to worry about slipping, that’d be best. When you get inside, use your cement to immobilize the villain holding All Might. Present Mic, you use your quirk to tell the students to get out of the way. Got it?”

“YEAH!!! Hey, kids! Clear a path for us, ya dig?!?!”

Izuku noted that the comms were programmed to decrease the volume of Mic’s voice when he activated his quirk. He’d definitely have to take a look at that coding after this was over, that was so cool! He listened to Cementoss briefly relay his instructions to Iida and then there was a sound of an engine before a grey and white blur launched through the front doors, stopping just before the steps. Within seconds, the cement under the plaza had come alive and hardened just short of All Might, neatly encasing the monster.

“Crap!” Shigaraki scratched his neck. “The heroes are here!”

“Perhaps it would be best for us to make our exit.” Kurogiri said, already making a portal to leave.

“No! We can’t let them get away!” Izuku yelled. “Does he even have a real body to target…?”

“Iz..Cheat Code-kun!” Mei yelled and pointed at the screen. “If he’s got armor, he’s got a body, I overheard Rock-kun and Bomb-kun saying something about it!”

“And armor is made of metal, which…” Izuku scanned through the weapons until he found a taser, then reconnected his audio, “Wasn’t your objective to kill All Might?”

That set Shigaraki off, “Show your stupid face you cheater! If it wasn’t for you changing the rules, our quest would be done by now!”

“Tomura Shigaraki, calm down.”

Kurogiri was so distracted trying to calm Shigaraki’s most recent tantrum that he didn’t see the attack coming until the electricity hit him in the back. Immediately, he seized up and fell to the ground unconscious and the mist surrounding his body temporarily dissipated just enough for Izuku to see the man underneath, though the effect disappeared before he could get a good look at the villain’s face. Knocking him out had also caused the portal to close, slicing the Nomu in half.

Izuku felt like he was going to throw up. Sure, the Nomu didn't seem human, but he probably was and it was Izuku’s attack that caused the portal to close and kill him...wait, how was the Nomu still moving?

“I told you, Cheat Code,” Shigaraki gloated as the Nomu *completely regenerated his missing limbs,* “Nomu doesn’t follow the rules!”

“H-how?” Izuku watched in shock, “Multiple quirks? That would change everything we know about…”

“Fight now, nerd later.” Mei reminded him. “Man, these students really wanna fight, don’t they? It’s just these three, but I’m running out of stuff to throw at ‘em.”

Izuku muted himself and looked over at the screens Mei was working with. It was Katsuki and Kirishima on one and Todoroki on the other. All extremely powerful students and all probably itching for a fight. Izuku knew he couldn’t trust Katsuki not to try to explode Shigaraki

the moment he saw him, but one of the other two...well maybe it'd be worth the risk to get Aizawa out of there so that All Might could fight without worrying about hurting him even more.

"Let Todoroki through." Izuku ordered. It would be too difficult to separate Kirishima from Katsuki. "I'll handle it from there."

Mei looked at him skeptically, "Are you sure? Nedzu said…"

"I'll take the blame if something happens, Mei-chan." Izuku said. "Just do it."

This was the oddest villain attack Shouto had ever been a part of, not that he had many other experiences to compare it to. First, the villains breaking into a secure facility, then the absolutely pitiful efforts of the front line, and finally, the way that the building itself had seemed to come alive to prevent him from helping in the main fight. That last one was probably due to Cheat Code, whoever that was. Shouto had heard his father ranting about *idiots in support who didn't know when to shut up and take orders,* by which he meant to say that they thought they could tell Endeavor what to do. Cheat Code must be someone like that.

Which basically meant that Shouto liked him already.

That didn't mean, however, that he was going to stop fighting. He had been training his entire life to be a hero, so he could more than handle these weak villains. It was stupid to make Aizawa keep fighting alone and outnumbered when Shouto could help. Cheat Code, however, seemed determined to make him leave, which meant that it was both relieving and incredibly suspicious when the environment suddenly stopped fighting him. Shouto wasn't about to look a gift horse in the mouth, so he rushed toward the plaza as quickly as he could and took stock of the situation.

It was chaos.

The teachers had arrived and were beginning to fight the last of the cannon fodder that Aizawa and his classmates hadn't taken care of, but they apparently weren't out of the woods yet. A giant villain was matching All Might punch or punch while trying to maneuver around Aizawa, who was on the ground, but appeared to be waking up. The warp villain was on the ground as well, but the leader was using the fight between All Might and the monster to shield himself from any potential attacks from the teachers. Shouto, however, might be able to

get a clear shot at him. It would put him at risk, especially since he didn't know what the villain's quirk was, but living with his father was a risk too, so it was just what heroes did.

It was only years of his father's training that kept him from jumping when a loud voice echoed from a speaker right behind him, "Use your ice as a slide to get Eraserhead out of there and take him to the entrance."

Shouto knew there was no point in looking around, since it was almost definitely Cheat Code giving the orders, "Wouldn't it be better to attack the leader directly?"

"Prioritize the rescue." Cheat Code pleaded. "All Might can't fight at full power if Eraserhead is in the way, and he's in no condition to keep fighting right now."

Izuku held his breath as Todoroki hesitated, looking between Shigaraki and Eraserhead before nodding. Izuku let out a sigh of relief. There had been no guarantee that Todoroki would trust him, especially since the students probably didn't know he was working with the teachers, but he'd been hoping.

A slick track of ice shot forward from Todoroki's foot and froze the ground under Eraserhead, then more ice piled underneath him until gravity took control and Eraserhead, who was now awake, if extremely disoriented, was able to slide away from the fight. Honestly, on second thought, sliding him probably hadn't been the safest option with his injuries, but it was the only thing Izuku could think of that wouldn't put Todoroki at risk and he'd promised Nedzu that he would protect the students. Hopefully Eraserhead wouldn't be too angry at him.

All Might glanced over to Todoroki with a nod, "Take care of him, young Todoroki!"

For about half a second, Izuku wondered if Todoroki would attack the villains anyway, but then Eraserhead groaned quietly. Todoroki's eyes filled with something unreadable and he nodded to All Might before helping Eraserhead back to the entrance. Good. Now onto the Nomu.

"There's no way to know what quirks the Nomu has," Izuku broadcasted, grateful that he'd insisted on All Might saving his strength for the fight, "but if he was designed to beat you, All Might, he's probably got what it takes to withstand you at full strength."

“Then I’ll just have to go beyond that!” All Might said. “Plus ultra!”

The surrounding fights came to a gradual stop as everyone had to anchor themselves to avoid being blown away from the whirlwind that was created as the two exchanged blows faster than Izuku could see. He couldn’t help fanboying just a bit as All Might used a final punch to knock the Nomu through the ceiling, “Whoa…”

“Well, villain.” All Might grinned. “You’re outnumbered and your ultimate weapon is out of commission. Are you really sure you can beat this level?”

“No! Cheaters!” Shigaraki lunged forward and Izuku’s breath caught as he realized that All Might was steaming! Going beyond his quirk’s limits like that probably took the last of his strength, but he should have enough left to dodge...shouldn’t he?

Shigaraki screamed as Snipe shot his hand and one of his legs, but the rest of the bullets were redirected by a purple warp gate.

Izuku swore and reached for his keyboard. When had Kurogiri woken up? Had they all been so distracted by All Might’s fight that no one had noticed? He tried to think of something to stop the villains, but the warp gate was already passing over Shigaraki, taking him to god knew where.

Izuku caught one final complaint from Shigaraki right as the portal closed, “Sensei lied to me! All Might's not weaker at all! Why didn’t he tell me about the cheater?!”

He sighed and muted his mic as he sat back, suddenly extremely tired as the adrenaline he’d been running on for the past thirty minutes left him in a rush. Next to him, Mei was in a similar state. Present Mic had taken Eraserhead from Todoroki and was now handing him off to paramedics, who were also taking Thirteen and a maxed out Kaminari. Katsuki looked pissed and Kirishima was trying to comfort him as Hound Dog escorted them out of the building. Cementoss created a rough wall to block the student’s view and nodded to All Might, who took that as his cue to deflate with a bloody cough. It was only after he deflated that he seemed to remember about Izuku and Mei and he looked at the nearest camera in panic.

Mei’s eyes widened at All Might’s small form, “What the…I don’t think I was supposed to see that.”

Izuku glanced over at her and he knew he should be way more

worried about her finding out All Might's secret, but quite honestly, he was too tired to panic anymore, “Yeah. He does that sometimes.”

For his part, All Might looked slightly exasperated, “Young Cheat Code, this is serious!”

“Eh, it’s just Mei.” Izuku shrugged. “Better than the villains or all of class 1A. That’s part of why we needed to keep the students away from the fight, in addition to protecting them. Didn’t want anybody seeing that, you know? And she’s not gonna tell anyone, All Might, right, Mei?”

“Right…” Mei collapsed back into her chair. “Ok...yeah...whatever, the number one hero has some secret transformation quirk. No big deal.”

All Might coughed again, “I, uh, greatly appreciate your discretion, young…”

“Cheat Code?” Nedzu cut off All Might’s rambling before it could begin, making both Izuku and Mei jump. “Are you and your assistant alright?”

Izuku and Mei exchanged a look and she giggled, “We just beat the crap out of a bunch of villains, we’re exhausted! And Izu-kun is *my* assistant, not the other way around!”

Nedzu chucked knowingly, “I hid a blanket in your desk when I was creating your room. You never know when you’ll need a nap after a long night of working, after all!”

Izuku raised an eyebrow as Mei dug through the desk’s drawers and pulled out a giant fluffy monstrosity that really seemed larger than should realistically fit where they found it.

Mei gasped and nuzzled her face into the blanket, “Oooh! Izu-kun! It’s so soft!”

“Rest.” Nedzu said cheerfully. “You deserve it. You did well.”

Izuku froze. Nedzu was..proud of him? Had that ever happened with a teacher before? What was he supposed to do?! Should he say something? How was he supposed to handle this?

Mei quite literally pulled him out of his thoughts as she dragged him to the floor and wrapped both of them in the blanket. Izuku was

vaguely aware he should probably be panicking about *something* right now, but he was too exhausted to do anything but take the comm out of his ear and pass out.

And if Shinso happened to take a few pictures for blackmail purposes when he dropped by during lunch, well…Izuku could always find a way to hack his phone later and steal them.

Friendship

Chapter Summary

The day after the USJ.

Chapter Notes

I am so sorry that this chapter is so late!

Huge shout out to everyone on my discord server for giving me so many ideas for this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They cancelled school the day after the USJ attack to increase security, which meant that Izuku was bored. Normally, he'd be taking notes on heroes or cool quirks that he saw on the news, but all that the news was covering was the attack and he...wasn't quite ready to think about that yet. He knew that he should analyze Shigaraki's quirk or Kurogiri's warp quirk or even the Nomu's mess of quirks, but every time he thought about the whole attack, he just froze. Hound Dog had pulled both him and Mei aside before they left school the day before and warned him that something like that might happen and that it was normal and expected, but he still felt guilty and frustrated. He didn't understand it! It's not like the villain's quirks weren't interesting! He just...couldn't bring himself to think about them without panicking about the fact that he'd challenged a powerful villain or thinking through everything he did wrong that led to Thirteen and Eraserhead being hurt.

What he really wanted to do was work on his quirk reports for the first years, but that required the notebooks in his workroom and the students' files, which could only be accessed from a UA computer. He'd already emailed Nedzu asking if he could come in and work on them, but had been told to take a well-deserved rest, so he'd, only half-jokingly, texted Mei and asked if she'd be down to help him break into UA.

She'd said no.

So here Izuku was, scrolling through his *keep watching* section of Netflix for the fifth time because nothing sounded good. It sucked.

Izuku was just debating whether it'd be worth it to get takeout for

lunch when someone started pounding on the door. Izuku jumped a foot in the air and somehow ended up hiding behind the couch. Had the villains found him somehow? Was his poor attempt at a persona not enough to hide him.

Izuku frowned as the person outside knocked again. Shigaraki wouldn't knock. He'd just disintegrate the door. Same with Kuroguri. If he knew where Izuku lived, he'd warp straight into the house. But if it wasn't the villains, then who could it be?

"Izu-kun! I swear to God, if you went to UA on your own!"

Izuku squeaked and raced to throw open the door and let Mei in. She already had her arm raised to knock again while Shinso stood next to her looking slightly lost. Mei didn't waste any time pushing past him and dragging him back into his apartment by the hand.

"M-Mei-Chan!" Izuku stuttered. "Not that I'm not happy, but why are you here?"

"Making sure you don't do something stupid, apparently." Shinso deadpanned.

"Hey!" Izuku gave him a glare, then started grumbling under his breath, "It's not like I would have broken into UA on my own, that'd be stupid."

Shinso raised an eyebrow, "Like breaking into UA at all wouldn't be."

"Yeah, Izu-kun!" Mei said. "Look what happened to those villains yesterday! They had to deal with *you!"*

"Mei-Chan! That's supposed to me a secret!" Izuku glanced over at Shinso in a panic, but he just shrugged.

"She already told me you guys were involved when she texted me and dragged me here." Shinso said. "And it's not like everyone didn't already know there was an attack. Honestly, I'm not even surprised, you two are like...chaotic deities or something. Plus, there *had* to be a reason why I found you cuddling under your desk during lunch instead of eating."

Mei cackled over the sound of Izuku spluttering, "Oh Extra-Credit-Kun! You know us so well already! Plus, I had to tell him because I needed an extra brain."

Shinso's eyes widened slightly before almost immediately going back to his default bored expression, "You really need to practice not sounding ominous."

"Eh, that's boring." Mei shrugged and slammed her notebook open on the coffee table, "Look that these!"

Izuku and Shinso both leaned over the notebook and Izuku froze when he realized what was inside, "What...Mei-chan! I don't need a logo!"

Mei scoffed, "Of course you need a logo, Izu-kun! Imagine! Heroes are looking for the perfect analyst to help them on an important mission. Who else are they gonna pick besides Cheat Code! The victor of the USJ!"

Shinso didn't bother hiding his laughter as Izu-kun blushed and covered his face with his arms, "Mei-chan!"

"Hence why I needed Shiso." Mei huffed. "So! Extra-Credit-Kun! Which of these ideas is your favorite?"

"Hey!"

Shinso grinned at him and pulled the notebook toward him, "Hmm...oooh, these are cool!"

"Yep!" Mei grinned. "I'm thinking about making stamps, maybe even a paper embosser, you know, one of those texture things that leaves an imprint on the page?"

"Oh, I like that idea!" Shinso said, still grinning. The traitor. He was enjoying this, wasn't he?

"Me too!" Mei said. "It'll be perfect for when Izu-kun finishes his reports on the first years, because then he can just put his logo on the final page and…"

Izuku finally got enough control over his vocal chords to stop mindlessly sputtering and interrupt the two before they plotted to make him famous or something, "Guys! Don't I get any say in this?"

"Of course, Izu-kun!" Mei said sweetly. "You can pick the logo."

Izuku scowled at her, but when she didn't give in, he sighed and pulled the notebook toward him. Shinso wasn't lying, they *were* really

cool. There were a few in various stages of completion from where Mei had obviously gotten bored before finishing them, but they still gave him a really good idea of what was going through her head as she designed them. She had obviously tried to lean into the gamer aesthetic with Cheat Code, which Izuku could appreciate, even if he *really* didn't want a logo.

A few of them were based on the d-pad from video game controllers, with different colors on each button. A few of them looked more like crosses, while others had buttons and others were more stylized. One even showed the d-pad *on* the controller, which Izuku thought was a nice touch, even if it made the logo look a little busy. Another one had the same problem, even though it went with a more hacking or PC gaming aesthetic. It was a laptop, and on the screen it had his codename written as if it was a piece of coding. There were only a few keys on the keyboard, though...just the A, the B and the spacebar, which said *Start* for some reason.

"Mei, why is this computer so weird?" Izuku finally asked. "I wouldn't be able to code anything with that keyboard! And why just those keys?"

"It's because it's based on a famous cheat code." Shinso said. When Mei and Izuku both turned to stare at him, he shrugged defensively, "What? No one wanted to play with the future villain, so I ended up spending a lot of time playing video games."

"No one wanted to play with me either, but I ended up chasing hero fights." Izuku pointed out.

"And I ended up inventing." Mei added. "But that's not important! Didn't you look at how Cheat Code is written?!"

Izuku leaned down to see the paper a little better, "Y-you mean the arrows on some of the letters."

"Ugh!" Mei groaned. "Izu-kun, you're hopeless! I thought you were supposed to be super nerdy!"

"That doesn't mean I know everything about video games!" Izuku yelled.

"I spent forever on that!"

"I"m sorry!"

“It’s a stylized version of the Konami code.” Shinso interrupted. “Up, up, down, down, left, right, left right, b, a, start. The arrows are all in your codename. Two ups on the h, two downs on the A, one left and one right on the T, another left and right on the E. Then the rest of the code is on the keyboard. It’s a nice touch.”

“O-oh.” Izuku looked a little closer. “That makes sense.”

The more he looked at it, he really liked the stylized way that one was written, with the arrows paying homage to a real cheat code. Honestly, it looked kinda bad-ass, like it was something that Katsuki would be jealous of.

Which obviously meant that Izuku had to have it.

He still didn’t like the laptop though, “Would it be possible to combine that writing with one of the others?”

“Of course!” Mei said excitedly. “One of the advantages of that one is that you could just use it on it’s own and use it as a signature if anyone ever asks for your autograph!”

...and now he was blushing again, “Mei-chan! I’m an analyst! No one’s ever going to ask me for my autograph!”

“Never say never, Izu-kun!” Mei cackled.

“Can we just pick one of combine it with?” Izuku pouted.

“I like this one.” Shinso pointed to the page, “Though I’m also partial to the ones with glitching effects, but they would be hard to use as a signature.”

“I’m not going to be signing anything!” Izuku insisted. He looked at the logo Shinso was pointing to, which was one of the d-pad inspired ones. Each button was like an arrow pointing to the center and the top three were purple, green, and pink, while the bottom one just said Cheat Code. “I like it, but what do the colors mean?”

“They’re us!” Mei said proudly.

Shinso blinked at her, “...what?”

“See!” Mei gestured animatedly toward the page, “Pink for me! Green for Izu-kun! And purple for Extra-Credit-Kun!”

Shinso was trying to hide his nervousness under a layer of skepticism,

but to Izuku, he just looked slightly nauseous, “Why am *I* on there?”

Mei shrugged, “I needed another color and you’re the first person I thought of.”

“We could probably use another color!” Izuku offered quickly. “Why not orange for Powerloader?”

“Then the colors would clash!” Mei complained. “Purple works best.”

Izuku really didn’t want to make Shinso uncomfortable, which being included on the logo was clearly doing, “How about we just make those three buttons black? Then they’ll contrast well with the white button and we can put the styled Cheat Code signature on that one.”

“Ooh! I like it!” Mei said. “I still like the color, but black and white will work well too. It’s all techie!”

Shinso shot Izuku a grateful look and he smiled back as Mei quickly sketched out the new logo, “What do you think?”

Izuku and Shino leaned over the page and Izuku couldn’t hold back a smile. Even though he still didn’t think he needed a logo, it had turned out pretty cool and it was a fun thing to do with his friends. He liked it.

“Now all that’s left is to engrave it onto everything you own.” Shinso said with a shit-eating grin.

Nevermind. Next time they needed to pull Shinso out of class, Izuku was going to send Mei. See how he liked being called Extra-Credit-Kun in front of his whole class. What? He was just practicing being petty!

Chapter End Notes

> Here were some the various ideas that Mei had in her notebook (from the discord).
> X X X X X
>
> And the final logo!
> X

Strength

Chapter Summary

The students deal with the aftermath of the USJ.

Chapter Notes

Some fun fanart of the logo from last chapter
Beehave Children
Grendelhaus
Kain

Other Art!
Thanks for beeing with me yall
Liz_Cygibi_386
And does it count as fanart if I drew it?

On the one hand, Izuku probably shouldn't have snuck out of the house at dawn to get to UA early and work on the analysis packets for the hero course. On the other, Mei was already in the lab when he arrived, so it couldn't be too bad.

"Making up for lost time?" Izuku laughed when he saw her. "If you missed inventing so much you should have taken me up on my offer yesterday."

"Oh shut-up Izu-kun!" Mei swatted at him, but Izuku simply grinned and sidestepped as she grumbled, "It's not like breaking in when security was down for improvements would even be a challenge anyway…"

Izuku raised an eyebrow, "Are you saying you want to break in another day? Maybe test their new defenses."

Mei's eyes widened, "Do you think Nedzu would give us permission?! I could make so many babies for it and you could practice your hacking and can you ask him..?!"

"Maybe after the sports festival." Izuku laughed. "But don't you still have to fine-tune your support items for that? And we both still have to help Shinso get ready."

"Is that why you're here so early?" Mei asked. "Preparing for the sports festival?"

“Uh…no.” Izuku rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. “I, uh, I couldn’t sleep.”

Mei looked at him with pity and a level of understanding that made Izuku feel slightly guilty, “Me either. Nightmares?”

Izuku sighed and nodded, “I just...if I had...well, I wanted to come in and maybe get an abbreviated packet done for each student. If they’d had them a few days ago…”

“They still wouldn’t have had time to implement your suggestions.” Mei interrupted. “You know that, right?”

“I *know!* But…” Izuku groaned in frustration. “But I just can’t help but wonder…”

“If maybe their support items were better, then maybe they wouldn’t have had to go throught that.” Mei finished.

It threw Izuku for a loop, but for the first time since he’d arrived, he actually *looked* at the invention she was currently working on. It was something like a taser, but didn’t have a powersource, meaning that it was most likely designed for someone with an electricity quirk, one that the user couldn’t consciously direct or control. Izuku saw a stack of blueprints under that one, and he guessed that if he looked through them, he’d see one for most members of 1-A and maybe some of 1-B as well, “You couldn’t sleep either.”

“I just need to make sure they have the best babies they can get.” Mei said it like that was all there was to it, but even though he really hadn’t known her long, Izuku could still tell she was using pragmatism to hide the tangled mess of emotions underneath. “Isn’t that what a support engineer does? Gives a hero…”

“Their best chance.” They said together, then ended up laughing.

“We’re a mess, aren’t we?” Mei asked.

“Yeah, a little.” Izuku said. “But hey, where’s the fun without chaos. I’ll be in my workroom if you need me. I still, uh, I still have that blanket, if you need it.”

Izuku felt slightly hot, and figured it was from the lack of good sleep. Mei nodded and turned back to her newest baby, “It probably won’t do much good, but thanks.”

Izuku nodded and left toward his room when Mei spoke again.

“Thank you.” She said softly. “I don’t know what I’d do without you, Izu-kun.”

Izuku smiled softly, “Me neither.”

He left his door cracked open and they spent the time before their classmates arrived in companionable silence, working on their own projects.

Shouto sat in the back row, half listening to his classmates talk about the USJ attack while mostly lost in his own thoughts. When the villains had shown up, he had mostly just been...annoyed? Was that the right word? But it was expected, wasn’t it? Villains attacked heroes. It was what they did. It made sense. What didn’t make sense was the mysterious third party that had seemed intent on helping them.

Shouto wasn’t the only one curious either, if his classmates' before class conversations were any indication.

“It was kinda freaky, honestly.” Ojirio told Hagakure, who seemed to be hanging on his every word. “It was like the building came alive all of a sudden and the fire was on my side. Every time I started going in the wrong direction, it would block my path and it would catch any villains trying to sneak up on me before they even had a chance. It was creepy...but in a cool way, if that makes sense.”

“Cheat Code is a force of darkness.” Tokoyami said seriously. “I cannot describe my experience in any other words than that it was as if a benevolent supernatural entity was haunting the rain itself and bending it to their will.”

“Shut up about that fucking coward!” Bakugo exploded and glared at everyone. “If this Cheat Code fucker really wanted to help, he should have shown up in person rather than hiding behind a microphone like a scared little sheep! And he should have let us destroy the damn villains!”

“Come on, Bakubro! You gotta admit it was kinda manly how he protected us like that.” Kirishima hit his fists together with a grin. “I wanna meet him!”

And that was the other weird thing, wasn’t it? Everyone else who had

ended up caught in the zones had said that the building kept fighting them until the very end unless they headed toward the entrance, but Cheat Code had allowed Shouto to get close enough to save Aizawa. Why him? Why not Kirishima, who was arguably kinder and more likely to listen? Was it just because Shouto had a more powerful quirkl? But Bakugo was powerful enough to fight as well, so if it was just about power, he should have been allowed to reach the plaza as well. If it was about effectiveness rescuing, wouldn't Uraraka have been a better fit? She wanted to be a rescue hero and she could have floated Aizawa out of there.

So what made Shouto different? Why choose him out of all of his classmates.

Apparently, that was a question for another day because Aizawa chose that moment to walk in. One of his arms was in a thick cast and there was a large piece of gauze taped beneath his eye, but overall, he seemed a lot less injured than Todoroki had expected. He flinched as the class erupted into loud cheers.

"Aizawa-sensei! You're alright!" Ashido exclaimed loudly. "We were so worried when we saw Todoroki leading you out…"

"It's fine." Aizawa interrupted. "It would have been a lot worse if the villains' full attention had been on me or if Shigaraki had managed to hit me with his quirk, but as it was, the old lady was able to heal most of it."

"Is Thirteen-Sensei…?" Uraraka asked, worried.

"They're still in recovery." Aizawa said. "Let that be a lesson to you to always be aware of your surroundings. Quirks are dangerous, even and esspecially your own. Always expect someone to use every weakness against you. You got lucky this time. The thugs the league of villains sent were low level, and Cheat Code protected most of you from the inner circle, but when you get out onto the streets, you're going to meet villains who are prepared to do whatever it takes to kill you. If you're not prepared for that, leave now."

Nobody left, not that Shouto was surprised. It probably hadn't really hit them yet, he supposed. Shouto didn't leave either. His father could have killed him hundreds of times over if he wasn't so worried about losing his *masterpiece,* so Shouto was used to the threat of death. Not to mention that the threat of death would become that much more real if he were to refuse to be a hero.

“Speaking of Cheat Code,” Tsu asked tentatively, “who is he?”

Aizawa sighed and muttered something that sounded like *problem child* before addressing the class, “He’s an analyst.”

Kaminari and Ashido tried to interrupt, probably to whine and beg for more info, but Aizawa silenced them with a glare and Todoroki couldn’t help but notice that he didn’t activate his quirk like he normally would have so he must not be completely healed yet, “He is an analyst and *that is all the information you will be getting.* The UA staff has decided to keep his identity under wraps to protect him for now, since I think you each can understand why we wouldn’t want villains getting their hands on him, so, no, I will not be telling you who he is. Maybe he’ll tell you himself eventually, but until then, you’ll just have to deal with your curiosity. However,” Aizawa used his good arm to pull a stack of papers from his capture weapon, “he did stupidly decide to be overactive and give you these. Come up when I call your name.”

The room instantly dissolved into whispers as Aizawa called up Aoyama and handed him a few papers. He read through them and swore softly in french as the other members of the class were called. When Shouto’s name was called, he received a packet with two papers stapled together. The first section gave a brief description of his quirk, while the other sections gave bulleted lists of strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. At the end was an imprinted sticker with some kind of logo and Cheat Code’s name.

“These are abbreviated analyses of your quirks and fighting styles.” Aizawa explained once all the packets had been handed out. “You’ll apparently be receiving full versions near the end of the semester, once Cheat Code has had more of a chance to see you in action. He went to Nedzu early this morning, however, and insisted we give you these. Use them wisely. Analysts can be a hero’s greatest alley or greatest enemy, depending on how you treat them.”

“Whoa dude!” Sero yelled. “These are awesome! There’s more where this came from? That’s super cool!”

“More like super freaky.” Mineta complained. “How does this guy even know so much about us?”

The class looked toward Aizawa for an answer, only to find that he had already cocooned himself inside his sleeping bag and was slumped against the wall asleep, so he’d be absolutely zero help.

Shouto looked more closely at his packet and frowned as he read.

Strengths:

- *Ice Power*
- Ice control
- Strategic thinking (?)

Weaknesses:

- *Left side is left open to attack*
- Danger of hypothermia

Suggestions:

- *Use fire half of quirk.*

The analyst only had part of the picture, but that didn't make Shouto feel any less annoyed at yet *another* person telling him to use his fire. He didn't have to listen to someone…Shouto froze. Hadn't he decided to trust Cheat Code in part because Endeavor wouldn't have? Ignoring his advice completely would be exactly what Endeavor would do, but he still couldn't use his fire…

There was a loud explosion and Shouto looked up to see Bakugo throwing the remains of his smoking packet out the window, "I don't fucking need this loser to tell me what I already fucking know! I don't have *impulsivity issues!"*

Aizawa crawled out of his bag, grabbed another packet from his capture weapon and slammed it down on Bakugo's desk, "He mentioned you might do that. Be careful with that one. If you explode

it, you won't be getting a third."

Bakugo reached for the papers, sparks already leaping across his palms, but Aizawa snatched the packet out of his reach, "What the fuck, old man?"

"Bakugo." Aizawa said sternly. "If you don't want to be a better hero, or a hero at all…"

Bakugo huffed, but grabbed the papers without setting them on fire and slumped down in his seat, staring at the packet like it had personally offended him. Shouto could relate.

"If only we could actually meet this analyst in person!" Iida lamented loudly. "I have a great many questions on how to improve my quirk's functions and…"

"Suit yourself." Jiro shivered. "It was freaky enough knowing that he could make the ground collapse beneath us at any moment. My money's on him being even scarier in person."

"What a mad banquet of darkness." Tokoyami muttered.

It had already been a long day by the time Hitoshi reached the gym after school and started stretching, considering that Midoriya was probably still trying to pull Hatsume away from whatever invention she was currently working on. Hanging out with the two yesterday had been fun, but his foster parents had yelled at him when he'd gotten home, accusing him of going out and trying to join a gang despite the fact that he'd *tried* telling them he was going out with friends before he left. Too bad they wouldn't actually let him *talk* to them. Or at all.

And then all everyone was talking about was the hero course. Those lucky students with the perfect quirks and everything laid out for them without having to fight tooth and nail and convince everyone that he deserved every chance that they did. Even his kidnappers had spent the day focused on them, which was annoying, even though he really didn't have any right to be angry, considering that those two had been involved with the attack. At least they didn't think he was a villain.

Yet.

A slight sound behind him had Hitoshi jumping to his feet and

whirling around to see an injured hobo nodding at him approvingly, “Good situational awareness. So you’re Cheat Code’s extra credit project.”

Oh no. Hitoshi froze as he realized that this wasn’t just any injured hobo. He was talking to *Eraserhead! Eraserhead knew who he was!?!*

Hitoshi forced himself to snap out of his...well, his hero worship, for lack of a better word, “Uh, yes, sir!”

Eraserhead looked at him appraisingly, “You’re doing physical training?”

“Yes sir!” Hitoshi nodded quickly. “I’m mostly focusing on speed and flexibility for now, since I don’t have time to gain a lot of strength before the sports festival, but…”

“But there’ll be time for that later if you get into the hero course.” Eraserhead finished. “Don’t underestimate stealth, either. You’d be surprised how often it can come in handy.”

Hitoshi’s eyes went wide. Was Eraserhead really giving him advice? He didn’t know what to say. What was someone supposed to say when their favorite hero gave them tips?

After a too long moment where Shinso was freaking out, Midoirya burst through the door, his jacket covered in some sort of oil that must have exploded from Hatsume’s most recent experiment, “Shinso! Sorry I’m late, Mei-chan...Oh, Eraserhead! I, uh, I didn’t know you’d…”

Eraserhead interrupted Midoriya’s rambling by bowing and Midoirya instantly turned bright red and started sputtering, “What…? Eraserhead, sir, I...uh, I don’t...what?”

“You helped save my students.” Eraserhead straightened. “Thanking you is only logical.”

“I, uh…” Midoriya looked to Hitoshi helplessly, but he was still reeling from *Eraserhead giving him advice!* Midoriya turned back to Eraserhead and bowed back, “I apologize for not doing more.”

Eraserhead snorted, “I knew you’d be a problem child. I don’t know what else I expected.” He turned to leave, but stopped at the door and fixed Hitoshi with a look, “You have potential. Don’t waste it. It’s not going to be easy to claim the extra seat in my class.”

That challenge was apparently what it took to snap Hitoshi out of his trance and he couldn't help smirking slightly, "It won't be easy to be a hero either, but that doesn't mean I'm not going to do it."

Eraserhead gave a creepily wide grin and left, allowing the door to swing closed behind him. When he was sure he was gone, Hitoshi deflated, "Midoirya, I think I just met somebody even scarier than you are."

He ignored Midoriya's sputtering denials as he went back to stretching. He had a sports festival to win, after all.

Projection

Chapter Summary

Shinso's quirk is just so fun to think about!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Micheal.with.a.bee

Memes!
X X X X

Have a happy and safe Thanskgiving to everyone in the US!

Hitoshi restlessly curled his toes inside his shoes as he tried not to move his head, “Are you guys actually sure this is safe?”

“Of course it is, Extra-Credit-Kun!”

He couldn’t see Hatsume and it was honestly kinda freaking him out. He knew his kidnappers wouldn’t hurt him on purpose...on accident though was another thing entirely. And wasn’t that a comforting thought to have while strapped to a brain scanner.

“Don’t worry dearie.” Recovery Girl’s voice came from the same general area as Hatsume’s. *“My* machines actually work without blowing up.”

“Hey, it’s part of my creative process!”

“I’ll accept that when you and your classmates stop coming to me with burns!”

“Most of them give those burns to themselves.” Hatsume insisted sullenly. “Their inventions blow up too.”

“Not as much as yours, dearie.”

None of this was actually comforting. Recovery Girl may be kind and grandmotherly, but she was honestly just as intimidating as Hatume and Midoriya were in her own way. She’d taken one look at the bags under Hitoshi’s eyes and immediately threatened to physically knock him out if he didn’t take better care of himself, all while muttering

something about *almost worse than Aizawa* under her breath. It was scary.

“Don’t pay any attention to them.” Midoriya at least could understand his predicament, considering that he was lying in a machine right next to him. “It’s gonna be fine! Recovery Girl, are we ready to start?”

“Yes, dearie, let me just…” there was a concerning pause, “and there! You may begin!”

“Alright, Shinso! Just ask me a question!”

“Why are you all like this?” Hitoshi deadpanned.

“Like wh...?”

Midoriya’s voice sounded genuinely confused before Hitoshi took control of him and mentally ran through the commands they had discussed beforehand, “Alright. Blink twice.”

He couldn’t see Midoriya obeying the command, but he must have because Hatsume made a very interested noise, “Oooh! Which is which?”

“This one is Shinso’s and this one here is Midoriya’s.” Recovery Girl responded. “This is fascinating…”

“Am I good to keep going?” Hitoshi asked.

“Yes!” Hatume yelled. “Do it!”

“Ok…” Hitoshi said hesitantly. “Um...what’s your name?”

Midoriya stayed silent.

“Next!” Hatume ordered.

Hitoshi rolled his eyes. He didn’t know why both these questions had been on the list, considering that they were the same question, “Tell me your name.”

“Izuku Midoriya.”

Hitoshi startled, sitting up and staring at Midoriya in shock, half expecting him to have somehow broken free of his control, but no. Midoriya’s eyes were still glazed over and empty.

“Bink twice.” Hitoshi ordered.

Midoriya blinked.

“What the fuck…” Hitoshi whispered. “I…I can’t control upper brain functions! I…he shouldn’t be able to answer that! I didn’t tell him to say *Izuku Midoriya,* so he should have stayed silent!”

“You ruined it!” Mei complained as she went and pinched Midoriya’s arm. “You weren’t supposed to move!”

Hitoshi was too shocked to respond, but Midoriya couldn’t shut up as soon as he had control over his mouth again, “I was right! Recovery Girl! Did you get the pictures from that last question?”

“Yes, of course I did, dearie,” Recovery Girl sighed and looked sternly at Hitoshi, “Though we’re lucky that you didn’t move *before* those were processed. What if they’d blurred? That’s why you don’t move during brain scans!”

Hitoshi was still just trying to process everything as Midoriya went to go look at the scans, and he may as well have been the one brainwashed judging by how numbly he obeyed when Midoriya waved him over to come look as well.

“Alright, so here’s the pictures from our conversation before you activated your quirk.” Midoriya pointed to the screens. “When you were talking, your brain lit up like this, and when I was talking, my brain lit up.”

Midoriya nodded to Recovery Girl, who pulled up another set of brain pictures, “Now these are the ones from that last experiment. In these two, you’re giving the order, but in these, I’m responding. What do you see?”

Hitoshi looked at the pictures and frowned, “You saw that these two are when you were responding?”

Midoriya nodded.

“And this is my brain,” Hitoshi pointed at the screen as he talked, “and this one’s yours?”

“Yep!” Midoriya smiled knowingly.

“…But why is my brain lit up when you’re talking?” Hitoshi was so

confused. “Are you sure you’re not getting them mixed up? Shouldn’t your brain be lighting up like it did when we were talking before?”

“Exactly.” Midoriya grinned. “I think the reason why it takes so much effort to maintain your quirk’s connection without taking control is because your brain is actually connecting to their body. Rather than simple brainwashing, it’s almost as though you literally put yourself in the driver's seat, almost like a projection of your own consciousness. I wonder if you could learn to see through their...no, not right now, we can explore that later. The big thing is that even though you didn’t tell me exactly what to say, I was still able to respond because *you know my name!”*

Hitoshi’s mind was whirling, “But...that still means that my quirk is useless for information gathering. They can only tell me things I already know.”

“For now, yes.” Midoriya said. “But we’ve already been practicing having a partial connection when you wait to activate your quirk, so now we just need to see if you can give that partial control back to the person you’re brainwashing. You’ll still be in control of their mouth, but they’ll be able to access their own memories.”

“In which case, both your brains will light up!” Hatsume added. “I wonder if there’s a baby that would make that easier.”

“I am not having any of your babies near my brain.” Hitoshi said quickly. “No. not happening.”

“Oh, you’re no fun.” Hatsume pouted. “But you’re gonna need a lot of practice.”

Hitoshi nodded in determination. He’d never thought being a hero was going to take anything less.

“So...I hear you’ve taken an interest in my problem child.” Hizashi said over dinner, looking like he wanted nothing more than to have a wide smile as he said it.

“He’s not a problem child.” Shouta said stubbornly, glaring at his husband. “And if he was, he’d be Majima’s, not yours.”

“Just because the two students that keep kidnapping him are support course students doesn’t erase the fact that he’s in *my* homeroom.” Hizashi paused and grinned at him. “For now…”

“Shinso has to prove himself at the sports festival before he can join my class.” Shouta said. “If he keeps up with the determination I saw the other day, he *might* just have a chance, but only if he doesn’t think his quirk is an ace in the hole. My students aren’t stupid. They’ll figure out his quirk sooner rather than later, so relying on that alone won’t be good enough.”

“Oh, don’t be such a spoil sport.” Hizashi threw a pea at him, which Shouta dodged. “Give the kid a chance, maybe he’ll surprise you. He *does* have two of the top support students in their year on his side.”

Shouta sighed, “That’s what I’m worried about. Shinso may not be a problem child, but those two *definitely* are. What kind of first year helps with a villain attack and makes himself a target when he doesn’t have to?”

“A mini-nedzu?” Hizashi suggested helpfully.

Shouta snorted, “No. He’s still nicer than the rat.”

“I’m glad you like them.” Hizashi smiled. “It’s been a while since you’ve actually taken a liking to a student.”

“My job is to keep them alive.” Shouta pointed out. “Not to like them.”

“Still, I’m glad you’re starting to take Shinso under your wing.” Hizashi said, turning back to his food.

“I’m not taking…”

“You are.” Hizashi cut him off. “And that’s not a bad thing, Shou. You know that right?”

“He has potential.” Shouta tried to defend himself, but his husband knew him better than that and simply gave him a mischievous smile. Oh no, he didn’t like where this was going.

“You know, I know you said that our students keep us busy enough that we don’t need kids of our own, but…” Hizashi said suggestively.

“We are not adopting Shinso.” Shouta said firmly. “Even if we had time to adopt a child, which we don’t, Shinso has parents of his own.”

“Actually, he doesn’t.”

That made Shouta do a double take, “What?”

“I said he doesn’t have parents of his own.” Hizashi frowned. “I didn’t ask the details, but his file says he’s currently in a foster home. So if you wanted to…”

“We’re not adopting him.” Shouta insisted. “He’s probably very happy where he is and there’s absolutely no reason to uproot him from a good situation to move in with two of his teachers, which would be weird enough, but then those two teachers also *work two jobs each.* Three, in your case.”

“Aww, Shou…” Hizashi whined playfully. “You *do* care about him!”

Shouta glared at him, “Nevermind. Shinso has been officially upgraded to problem child and it’s entirely your fault.”

“Aw, don’t be like that!” Hizashi laughed. “I mean, we could be a very happy…”

“Still not adopting him.”

Vital Weapons

Chapter Summary

Final preparations for the sports festival

Chapter Notes

So sorry for dropping off the face of the earth. It happens.

Art!
bruhwhy
Kitty
Micheal.with.a.bee

Memes!
X X X X

Izuku glared at the calendar like it had personally offended him. It wasn't really fair, since the calendar obviously didn't decide that time should keep marching forward, but the fact was that the sports festival was in three days and Izuku had been too busy helping Shinso and analyzing the first years to plan what *he* wanted to do.

He glanced out the window of his workroom and watched Mei, who appeared to be in her own little world, putting the final finishing touches on Shinso's support item, while her own were teetering in a steadily growing pile on the floor beside her. It seemed like everyone else had a goal for the festival. Katsuki wanted to prove he was the best, Mei wanted to impress investors, and Shinso wanted to get into the hero course. Heck, even his classmates were looking forward to showing off their inventions in the first round!

So where did that leave Izuku?

He'd found his perfect place in the support course, so he didn't want to transfer like Shinso did. He didn't actually *build* support items, so he didn't have any to show off like Mei and his classmates did. He was just...little old quirkless him, just like he'd always been. Like he'd always be.

Despite the fact that he'd technically been staring out the window and should have seen her coming, Izuku still jumped a foot in the air when Mei slammed the door open and strode in, trying to wipe soot off her

nose, but only successfully smearing it all over her cheeks instead.

“It’s ready!” She announced proudly. “Where’s Extra-Credit-Kun?”

“Probably in class.” Izuku sighed, turning back to his current analysis. “Like he always is at this time.”

There was a beat of silence and Izuku finally turned to see Mei looking at him suspiciously, “Ok, what’s got you down?”

“N-nothing?” Izuku stuttered.

The crosshairs in Mei’s eyes narrowed slightly, “Not buying it, Izu-kun. You’re normally super excited, so…?”

Izuku shrugged and forced a smile onto his face, “It’s nothing. You and Shinso are gonna do great in the sports festival!”

Mei sighed, “Oh, so *that’s* what’s wrong.” She forcefully spun his chair around so they were face to face and leaned down so Izuku had to lean back to avoid being nose to nose with her. “You realize you’re gonna do great in the sports festival too, right?”

“I don’t *need* to.” Izuku protested. “Not like you and Shinso do.”

“But you want to.” Mei countered.

Izuku stopped, “What?”

“You want to do well!” Mei said it like it was obvious. “You want to prove what you can do! You want to show all those stupid bullies that your notebooks weren’t a waste of time!”

“I guess it would piss Katsuki off if I were to make it past the first round.” Izuku chuckled. “And the farther I get, the more I can help you and Shinso!”

“Exactly!” Mei punched him playfully on his arm. “So don’t let me catch you saying that you don’t need to do your best just because you *don’t need the publicity* or whatever. Right Cheat Code?”

Izuku scowled, “I still can’t believe that you made me make a logo. I’m not popular!”

“Not now you’re not.” Mei grinned. “But after UA, when you’re not some helpless student anymore, your brand’s gonna be the biggest in the entire hero analysis industry.”

“It’s not like it’s a very large industry to begin with.” Izuku muttered. “So, was there any reason you came in here besides to apparently scream some sense into me?”

Mei’s face lit up, “Oh yeah! Extra-Credit-Kun’s weapon is done! I just need him to do the final tests and make sure everything fits so he can get used to it before the festival! Can you go get him *please?* ”

“Ok….” Izuku looked back at the video he was supposed to be analyzing. If he wanted to keep up with Shinso and Mei in the festival without a quirk or fancy support items, he would need to memorize the weaknesses of every single hero student and come up with ways to counter each of their quirks. In three days. Fun.

Maybe he could make Mei wait until after school? But then Shinso wouldn’t have as much time to get used to his new equipment. If only she could go get him herself, but then she’d probably make a scene and embarrass Shinso…which would be brilliant payback for ganging up on him with Mei about the logo and for taking those pictures that Izuku had had to steal back after the USJ.

Izuku smiled slowly, “Mei, I’m kinda busy right now, but I can give you a map to his classroom!”

Hitoshi was bored.

Or maybe he wasn’t bored. Maybe he was using his boredom to mask his nervousness? What if his training hadn’t been enough? What if Midoriya’s strategies for hiding his quirk’s activation requirements weren’t enough and everyone could counter him perfectly after the first round? What if…

The entire class flinched as the door to the classroom hit the wall with a loud bang and Mei strode in, grease and soot smeared across her face as she gave her best mad scientist grin. Oh, who was he kidding, that was her default expression. They made eye contact across the room and Mei’s grin got even wider as she made a beeline toward him.

“Hi, Mic-Sensei! I’m stealing Shinso-kun for an hour!” Mei announced loudly. “I need to make his babies!”

Mic choked on his own breath and Hitoshi turned a brighter red than he had thought was possible without some sort of quirk involved. Before either of them could give any other reaction, Mei had grabbed

Hitoshi's hand, yanked him to his feet and started pulling him toward the door like an overexcited puppy.

The class's exclamations were still audible even after the door slammed closed behind them.

Izuku tried to hold in his laughter as Mei physically dragged a cherry red Shinso into the lab, but he wasn't doing a very good job of it if the glare Shinso sent him was any indication.

"I hate you." Shinso said seriously.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Izuku tried to sound innocent, but the stubborn smile on his face kinda ruined the effect.

Shinso glared harder, as if just staring at him hard enough would activate his quirk, "You sicced Mei on me."

Izuku shrugged, "You deserved it."

"I…"

"Now that we're done embarrassing Extra-Credit-Kun, can I show him the baby I made?" Mei interrupted.

Shinso and Izuku both looked at her in shock.

"You did that on purpose?!" Shinso exclaimed.

Izuku doubled over in laughter as Mei huffed, "Like Izu-kun really *didn't* have time to go get you himself. He's hacked the USJ, he could have easily hacked the announcement system if he wanted to instead of sending me!"

Izuku laughed even harder, "I...I think I see why Present Mic calls us Powerloader's gremlins now!"

"I hate both of you." Shinso deadpanned. "First you kidnap me and now this. Why did I even agree to this."

"Because of this!" Mei grinned and dumped a large length of metal ribbon on the table. "Meet Hatsume Industry's Baby 367! Amplifying Apprehension Armor!"

Shinso eyed the ribbon suspiciously, "What does it do?"

Mei's eyes glinted with excitement, "Pick it up and find out!"

Shinso scoffed, "No thanks. I still haven't forgiven you for those taser marbles you handed me last week."

"Oh you're no fun." Mei pouted. "Fine. This baby has three functions. I can add more later, but this is what I could pull together while still giving you time to practice before the sports festival. The ribbons reflect sound, so you can configure them to applify your voice without having to transmit it and even change the way it sounds, so it *can* be used as a voice modifier, but it's gonna take some fine tuning. For now, it can get close, but it still sounds pretty tinny and it's obvious that it's an imitation if the listener is paying attention."

"Alright…" Shinso said slowly and hesitantly picked up the pile, almost throwing it as it was apparently lighter than he'd been expecting. "So it amplifies and modifies my voice. What about the other functions?"

"It almost looks like Eraserhead's capture weapon." Izuku pointed out.

"Good work, Izu-kun! I knew there was a reason I kept you around!" Mei grinned. "Hearing you two geek about about him made me curious, so I looked him up and his scarf baby is so cool! It doesn't seem high tech at first, but there's so much hidden in it and…"

"Mei!" Shinso interrupted her before she could start rambling. "I know what Eraserhead's scarf does. So...I can use this to grab opponents and stuff?"

Mei huffed, "Well, yeah, but Eraserhead's scarf takes a lot of practice to control and practice takes time you don't have and we can't make it out of fabric, since it has to reflect sound, so this version isn't gonna have the same flow as his. Think of those slap bracelets you had back in elementary school. If you slap the ribbon hard enough against something, it'll wrap around it automatically. We'll probably fine-tune it later, but this'll be good enough for now."

Shinso nodded slowly, "Ok...that makes sense….ish."

"That accounts for the amplification and the apprehension." Izuku said, running his hand over one of the ribbons. "What about the armor?"

Mei's eyes lit up with excitement and Shinso's darkened with fear in

response as she grabbed the ribbon and slammed it against his arm.

“Mei! Wait!” Shinso tried to protest, but before the words were even out of his mouth, the ribbon had wrapped itself entirely down his arm, encasing it almost completely. He stared at it in amazement.

“You can use the apprehension function on yourself to make an armor!” Mei cackled. “Isn’t it an amazing baby, Extra-Credit-Kun?”

“Wow…” Izuku breathed. “You’ve really outdone yourself Mei-chan”

Shinso took a deep breath and carefully reverted back to his default bored expression, “It’s ok, I guess.”

“I’ll take it!” Mei shrugged. “Now, we’ve got a lot of work to do, so let’s see you handle that baby!”

Anticipation

Chapter Summary

The morning of the sports festival.

Chapter Notes

Art!!!
Eat the Bee
Micheal.with.a.bee
I'm totally a Bee
Bee.wisp

Sorry, no time to link memes today, I have to get to work.

Hitoshi shouldered his bag and kept his head down as he walked into the kitchen. Mei had just texted him and told him that his new support item had officially been approved, which they hadn't really been worried about, considering that Midoriya was Nedzu's favorite, and that they'd meet him before the festival started to hand it off to him. The text hadn't mentioned anything about a meeting place, but somehow Hitoshi figured that wouldn't be a problem for his kidnappers. Honestly, the way they always seemed to know *everything* would have been a little creepy if he didn't trust them. Actually, scratch that, it was still creepy, but he could live with it.

It took his foster siblings a few seconds to notice that he'd arrived, but once the first one had seen him, their eyes widened and they elbowed the next one in a chain reaction until the entire room was dead silent only a few seconds later. Hitoshi resisted the urge to sigh, considering that any noise on his part could potentially get him in trouble and he didn't want to deal with that when he had the sports festival later.

He stuck a few pieces of bread in the toaster and ignored the stares of the other kids. It wasn't any wonder why they didn't trust him, it was hard to trust anyone after being in the system for long enough, and the fact that the adults didn't trust him didn't help, so as annoying as it was, Hitoshi couldn't blame them. It just meant that he made his breakfast to go most mornings so that he could get out of that house as soon as possible.

There was a small, frightened squeak behind him and Hitoshi flinched slightly. He'd been hoping to avoid the adults today, but apparently he

hadn't been quick enough. The foster mom at this home was a slight woman who could be easily blown away by a quick breeze. She was also terrified of everything, which meant that she *hated* Hitoshi, but at least she didn't hit him like the one a few homes back had.

Hitoshi kept his movements intentionally slow, not looking up from buttering his toast. Eye contact could be seen as threatening. It was best to just get out of here before the husband showed up. He didn't hit Hitoshi either, mostly, but he was the opposite of his wife in almost every other way. Where she was tiny, he was huge. Where she was quiet, he was loud. Where she would eye Hitoshi suspiciously until he finally left the house and she could breathe a sigh of relief, he would stand in the doorway and demand to know where he was going.

And then wouldn't let him answer.

Shoving a piece of toast in his mouth, Hitoshi shouldered his way past a few of the other kids and was almost at the door by the time the husband got there. He took one look at the scene and apparently decided that Hitoshi must have done something besides existing to deserve everyone's suspicion and crossed his arms, "And just where do you think you're going, boy?"

Hitoshi stomped down on his frustration and kept looking at the floor as he gestured to his uniform. *School* . He was going to school like he did every single morning. The only thing different was that today was the sports festival, not that he was sure these people cared enough to remember that.

He could tell just by the feeling that the man was glaring at him, weighing whether he was telling the truth or not and Hitoshi wanted to groan or yell or cry or scream or something, but he couldn't. If he did anything, it'd just make it worse and it would take him even longer to get to school and the relative safety of his kidnappers.

After a long moment of tense silence, his foster dad finally huffed, "Don't be late."

Hitoshi nodded tersely and gripped the strap of his backpack moderately tighter as he all but ran from the house, the tension not leaving his body until he was almost at the train station. It sucked, but whatever. It'd all be worth it if... *when* he became a hero.

It had to be.

Izuku was getting more and more nervous the closer the clock ticked to the opening of the sports festival. He and Mei had already changed into their gym uniforms and Mei had already tied hers around her waist the same way she did with her coveralls in the lab, showing off her toned arms in a black tank top. Should he follow her lead? He'd gained *some* muscle in the past month or so, a lot more than he'd expected, but he still wasn't *ripped* or anything.

He shuffled restlessly and Mei rolled her eyes, briefly setting aside Shinso's support item that she'd been polishing, "Calm down, Izu-kun. We have a plan!"

"I know…" Izuku groaned and slid his back down the wall so that he was sitting next to her on the floor. They were currently waiting in one of the hallways that led to where Shinso's class would be meeting, so he'd have to pass them to get there, and it had the added benefit of being somewhat secluded, which Izuku was grateful for. He didn't want to deal with a lot of people right now.

"So what are you worried about?" Mei went back to polishing. "We show off our stuff, annoy the hell out of Bully-Kun, and make sure Extra-Credit-Kun wins the festival. What else is there?"

"It's just…" Izuku huffed, "I've been weak my whole life, Mei-chan! Yeah, I fought back when those villains attacked, but I wasn't actually physically *there!* What if I get out before the first round has even really begun?"

"Then you'll do better next year." Mei shrugged. "That's the thing about progress Izu-kun, it means you fail sometimes. Doesn't mean it's not worth it to try."

Izuku smiled tiredly, "But it is worth it to worry?"

Mei grinned, "Never! Come on, Izu-kun! There's a reason our classmates are terrified of us!"

Izuku chucked, "They're not *terrified*… "

"Who's not terrified?" Shinso interrupted, looking as tired as ever. "I thought everyone was scared of you two."

"Extra-Credit-Kun!!!" Mei jumped to her feet and at first it looked like she was hugging Shinso, but when she let go, Izuku couldn't help but laugh as she realized that she'd actually just been dropping his weapon around his neck. She stepped back and looked him up and

down as Shinso stared at her in surprised confusion, “Hmmm, it doesn't really match the aesthetic of the gym uniform, but we’ll just have to make your hero costume a little more…”

“Anything else I should know before I go fight the entire school?” Shinso interrupted. “You know, since the only thing you two have on the line is extra credit and I have, I don’t know, my whole future.”

“Aww, he’s nervous!” Mei-chan giggled. “And hey! We care just as much about your success as our extra credit!”

“You’re gonna do great.” Izuku smiled reassuringly, why was it easier to not feel nervous when he was hyping up Shinso? “Just remember to change up your fake activation requirements. Make eye contact, touch people, do anything to distract them from the fact that they’ve already answered one of your questions.”

“And make good use of my baby!” Hatusme added. “Hatsume Industries is gonna be your exclusive support company when we graduate, ok?”

“Ok.” Shinso looked slightly more relaxed, which Izuku was gonna count as a win. “Good luck.”

“I don’t need luck!” Mei cackled. “I have babies!”

“So…” Hizashi gave him a mischievous smile. “Do you think our future son is going to win?”

“For the last time, we are not adopting Shinso.” Shouta sighed. “And whether or not he wins is entirely up to him.”

“But you think he’s got a chance.” Hizashi grinned.

“I think he has potential.” Shouta responded. “But the last round is going to be the hardest because everyone will have already figured out his quirk and info like that travels fast.”

“Don’t be such a spoil sport.” Hizashi lightly punched his arm. “You’re excited to see how he does.”

Shouta snorted and changed the subject, “How did you talk me into announcing again?”

“You lost the bet.” Hizashi shrugged. “Last two whole days without one of those weird jelly pouches and *eat actual food,* or I get my prize.

Just shut up and take your loss, Shou! If your didn't want to do this, you shouldn't have…"

"In my defense, I assumed your *prize* would be.." Shouta began.

"Oh! The kids are ready to come out!" Hizashi interrupted and turned on his mic. "Hello, hello, hello everybody! Are you ready to go PLUS ULTRA?!?!?!"

Obstacles

Chapter Summary

The obstacle course!!!

Chapter Notes

Sorry, I'm too tired to link anything today. Also, formal apology to literally anyone who knows anything about tech, I am just taking creative liberties with hacking.
Otherwise, happy New Year!

“Ten bucks he insults everyone during the opening speech.” Izuku muttered out of the corner of his mouth, leaning slightly closer to Mei so she could hear him above the noise of the cheering crowd.

“No bet.” Mei whispered back. “From what you’ve told me, he seems like just enough of an idiot to do it.”

Izuku’s eyes widened and he found himself smiling. He didn’t know exactly why it still shocked him that Mei was bold enough to be rude to Katsuki, even though he definitely couldn’t hear them, but a part of him was still irrationally afraid of what would happen when his old bully somehow discovered what she’d said. He shook his head and both of them straightened attentively as Katsuki slouched up the stairs and took his place at the mic. He glared at the other students and even at the audience as class 1A shuffled nervously, shooting each other concerned looks. Well, at least they’d had enough time to get to know their classmates!

“I just wanna say,” Katsuki grumbled, “I’m gonna win.”

Mei grinned at him before loudly joining in the booing with the other students and Izuku couldn’t help the surge of power he felt as he did the same. Sure, it wasn’t a big thing, just a few yells. It wasn’t like he was actually *fighting* Katsuki or anything, but still! It felt huge!

“Alright kiddos!” Midnight cracked her whip. “Are you ready to suffer?!”

Izuku gulped and adjusted his feet. His training with Shinso had made him a lot faster and he hoped strong enough to deal with whatever Nedzu had in mind. Speaking of Shinso, he glanced over to see him

striking up polite conversation with some gen-ed and business students, playfully bumping shoulders with some or holding eye contact for just a half-second too long with others and Izuku gave him a proud smile, which he returned with a smirk. Assuming he made it past the first round, which Izuku didn't doubt he would, the distractions would make him that much more difficult to fight head on.

To his other side, Hatsume was fiddling with one of her babies with a screwdriver. Izuku caught her eye and she gave him a manic grin. Izuku knew that if he asked, either she or Shinso would help him in a heartbeat, but he couldn't bring himself to get in their way. Mei needed to use this round to catch the eye of future investors and Shinso needed to prove himself to the hero teachers watching. Izuku wasn't a part of those goals.

But that didn't mean he wasn't going to come at it with everything he had. Determination filled his eyes and he found himself smiling slightly as Midnight announced the obstacle course and began counting down. He wasn't just *deku* anymore. He was Cheat Code. He was capable of so much more than he'd been led to believe his whole life. He could do this!

"Begin!"

The moment that Midnight called the race, Izuku immediately began analyzing. The first obstacle was obviously the doorway itself. There was a slight chill and all Izuku could think was *Todoroki* before a thick layer of frost started racing across the ground toward him and it was only the quick instincts from years of avoiding explosions that had him jumping just in time to avoid getting frozen to the ground.

Checking in on his friends he was relieved to see that Shinso was already ordering some of the people who had escaped to carry him through the crowd on their shoulders and Mei was doing even better as she used her hover boots and jet pack to glide above the ice and race to the front of the group.

Izuku shook his head and ran forward, doing his best to avoid slipping and having to grab onto the other competitors for balance. He ended up on his butt a few times and the frontrunners had already reached the next obstacle by the time he finally passed the slick ice patch. He heard a few screams and a loud cracking crash and pushed himself faster. He couldn't afford to fall behind this early in the race!

He skid to a stop as a laser obliterated the ground in front of him, then had to roll into a sloppy dodge as some sort of rock was thrown at him. Izuku let out an embarrassing squeak as he realized that he was being attacked by the stupid robots from the entrance exam. There were even zero pointers! Was Nedzu trying to kill them?!

Izuku internally thanked Nedzu for assigning him to analyze the first years, though. He'd watched dozens of students fight these things and paid attention to how they took them down, which meant that he knew their weaknesses, he just had to figure out a way to take advantage of them...which was going to be difficult to do without weapons.

He frantically glanced around and tried to see if he could use the surrounding rubble as a weapon, but after trying to pick up a sheet of metal and almost immediately falling flat on his face, Izuku realized he still didn't have *quite* enough muscle for that plan to work, which meant he was back to square one. He was back to being a stupid, quirkless, worthless deku who couldn't even fight robots because he didn't have a weapon and it's not like he could just use the arena as a weapon like he had at the USJ…

Izuku's thoughts stuttored to a stop and he giggled hysterically in disbelief as he pulled his phone out of a zippered pocket in his gym pants. He'd ended up bringing it along to take selfies with Mei between rounds and because after hacking for almost a year, the idea of being completely without technology made him slightly anxious. He'd gotten a heavy-duty case, as well as some other personalized modifications, so he wouldn't be as worried about it breaking, but now he couldn't help but be grateful that his anxiety had convinced him to bring it along. But was he actually stupid enough to try to pull this off?

Yes. Yes, he was.

"Is that student seriously texting?" Eraser's tired voice echoed over the speakers and Izuku winced in embarrassment, but kept working. Hacking from his phone was a little harder than from an actual computer, nevermind that, it was way harder, but if he could just take control of even a single robot, it'd be worth it.

"I wouldn't trust him to be doing anything that innocent!" Mic announced gleefully. "That, listeners, is Izuku Midoriya from the support course! Those of you with sharp eyes might have already noticed his friend Mei Hatsume who used a flamethrower on those

pesky bots. Midoriya, however, has a different specialty!"

Izuku almost cheered as one of the one pointers, which thankfully had a little less security than the more dangerous bots, suddenly stopped and beeped happily as its eyes turned from red to green. He didn't waste any time climbing onto the bot's shoulders and letting it race him through the battlefield. He had to use the laser systems on a few enemy bots, but thanks to his previous analysis, he knew exactly where to aim to take each one down with one hit. All in all, Izuku managed to pass the second obstacle in under half the time it had taken him to pass the first.

The fact that the one pointers focused on speed rather than firepower ended up being a huge advantage as well, since Izuku was able to just hitch a ride all the way to the next obstacle, passing dozens of students, including a few from the hero classes. He ended up reaching the edge of the pit just as Mei was clearing it. He couldn't see Shinso, so he could only hope that their extra credit project was doing well, but he didn't have time to worry about that at the moment because he had to figure out a way to cross a full sized canyon!

The various pillars were connected by ropes, which meant that Izuku probably wouldn't be able to bring the full robot with him...unless...He steered his robot over to one of the hero course students, who was just starting to try to cross the ropes like a tightrope. He jumped off the robot and grabbed her by the collar before she could get too far, or worse, fall.

"Uraraka right?" Izuku forced himself to ignore his panic at being so bold. "You have an antigravity quirk, right?"

"Umm…" Uraraka looked at him suspiciously. "How do you know that?"

"Entrance exam." Izuku answered evasively. "Would your limit be enough for this?"

He jerked a thumb back at the robot, "If you remove its gravity, I can maneuver it across the ropes without falling and we can ride it all the way to the next obstacle!"

Uraraka looked hesitant, and Izuku could tell that they were running out of time.

"It's faster than walking?" He tried. "And we don't know what the next obstacle is, so maybe a robot will be helpful! So...deal?"

He smiled and held a hand out hopefully. Uraraka only hesitated another second before grabbing his hand with a determined smile of her own, “Deal! And how did you get a robot?”

“Hacked it.” Izuku answered. “Ready?”

Uraraka shook her head in disbelief, “Sure, why not. Just...float the robot that the random guy apparently stole. Sure!”

“Hey! It’s not that bad!” Izuku pouted but didn’t have time to argue further as the robot started to float ominously. He clambered back onto it’s shoulders and lent Uraraka a hand to climb up beside him. The extra weight from the two of them kept the robot touching the ground, at least slightly, and Izuku hurriedly pulled out his phone again and started guiding it across the ropes.

“And *that,* listeners, is called teamwork!” Mic announced proudly. “And between courses too! Aren’t you proud of your student, Eraser?”

“Why should I be?” Eraser answered coolly. “Working with support professionals is common sense for any hero, so if Uraraka wasn’t smart enough to take advantage of such an opportunity, she wouldn’t be in the hero course.”

“Ooh!” Mic yelled. “And that’s coming from the teacher with the highest expulsion rate at UA, so take that to heart kids! Still, I wonder if we’re looking at a future business partnership?”

That would honestly depend on if Uraraka could handle Mei. Izuku chucked and got back to devoting his full attention to controlling the robot. It took him a second to get used to and at one point they’d almost fallen and were only saved by both of them grabbing the rope, but after that Izuku figured out it was best to have the robot basically grab the rope and pull itself along it rather than trying to roll along it like it normally would if it were solid ground.

Once they got the hang of it, it didn’t take much time at all to clear the drop, and even less to speed to the next obstacle after Uraraka returned the robot’s gravity. Izuku stopped the robot a few years back from the start of the visibly buried mines and turned to Uraraka, slapping the side of his robot as he spoke.

“This guy’s armor isn’t great.” He explained. “But I’m probably still gonna try just driving across and seeing how it goes. You’re welcome to join me, but…”

“But I’ll probably be safer of my own.” She finished and nodded in understanding as she jumped to the ground. “That’s alright! It was fun while it lasted! Thanks for the help…Midoriya? Right? That was what Mic-sensei said?”

Izuku smiled brightly, “Yeah! Good luck!”

“Right back at you!” Uraraka pumped her fist in determination. “See you in the next round, Midoriya!”

“O-ok!” Izuku waved to her as he left, then shrugged and started rushing forward as fast as he could, not that he thought speed would really make much of a difference. “Let’s do this!”

After he hit the first mine, there was a split second when Izuku thought his plan was actually going to work. That second ended when Izuku found himself ten feet in the air as the shattered remains of his robot came hurtling down around him. He grunted hard as he hit the ground.

So much for that plan.

“Oof, that looks like it hurt!” Mic called. “And that, kids, is why you don’t charge head-on into a minefield, even if you *do* have a giant robot on your side!”

Wonderful, Izuku grimaced as he got to his feet, way to add insult to injury. Alright, time for a new plan. The safest plan would be to go through the field slowly like everyone else was, but Izuku wasn’t sure exactly how many people were ahead of him. Probably at least forty would move onto the next round, but he didn’t know where he’d fall in that unless he found a better way to pass this obstacle, so…

Izuku glanced around and sighed in exhaustion as an even more insane plan formed in his head. Good thing he was used to Katsuki’s explosions, otherwise this was going to *hurt.* Actually, it was probably going to hurt anyway, but no pain, no gain, right?

As he dug up mines, Izuku seriously wondered if he’d lost his mind. Was he seriously about to use a piece of scrap as a sled and *jump onto a pile of explosives?* He’d know Katsuki for years, he *knew* how stupid that was! Why was he even considering…?

Oh come on, Izu-kun! You can’t build anything worthwhile without a few explosions.

Izuku grinned, actually laughing as he grabbed a piece of his ruined robot and catapulted himself straight onto the pile of mines. He'd almost forgotten that Katsuki wasn't the only *explosive* friend he'd ever had and these mines were obviously more similar to Mei's explosions than his bully's. Her explosions lifted him up and helped him fly, literally apparently, instead of tearing down his dreams and leaving scars that would never truly go away. So yeah, maybe it hurt a little, but an analyst like Cheat Code couldn't afford to be afraid of a few burns.

Now if only he could figure out how to land. Unfortunately, his plan had ended up working a little *too* well and he was rapidly approaching Katsuki and Todoroki, who were obviously in the front of the pack. As the two caught sight of him, Katsuki's face obviously contorted in anger and he launched himself forward as quickly as he could with his explosions, while Todoroki started running along an ice path he was creating as he ran.

On the one hand, Izuku could just curl into a ball and hope for the best like he had throughout elementary and middle school, but on the other, if he were to land too close to Katsuki, he'd be getting hurt from more than one type of explosion, so the best option was to let Katsuki stay ahead, but his little scrap sled obviously had other plans, so that wasn't going to work. That left using the two frontrunners to give him an extra boost and landing ahead of them, then sprinting to the finish line before Katsuki could catch up. Well, good thing he wasn't in middle school still, right?

Knowing he'd probably regret it, he firmly planted a foot on each of his opponents backs and kicked as hard as he could, using the momentum to slam his sled against the ground at the same time, trying to hit as many mines as he could. The resulting explosion launched him another twenty feet forward and Izuku rolled as best he could to minimize the impact as he landed.

Then he ran for his life.

"I hope you were rooting for the underdog!!!" Mic screamed. "Because the first place winner of the first round is from the support course!!! Izuku Midoriya!!!"

Teamwork

Chapter Summary

Our chaos crew prepares for the cavalry battle!

Chapter Notes

My update schedule has updated with the new year! Each fic will update every eight days and I will be posting every other day. The order is Mastermind, Viridian, Deku, and Cheat Code!

Art!
The Pancake Dream
I'm totally a bee
Kitty
Dabi Best Bro
Mufuku

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku didn't stop running when he reached the finish line. His lungs were burning, but he could hear the sound of incoming explosions behind him and knew better to assume that they were *all* from the remnants of the mindfield. His mind switched rapidly between berating himself for being an idiot and accidently winning the first round and trying to come up with any semblance of a plan that could keep him alive until the next round. He scanned the field, mentally screaming in relief when he realized that there was a news camera on the field.

He made a beeline toward it and hoped that his plan would actually work. Bullying a quirkless kid in the relative privacy of a prejudiced middle school was one thing, but beating up a kid between rounds live on national television? Even if Katsuki didn't get kicked out of the hero course, there would be consequences for something like that, so all Izuku had to do was make sure that Katsuki remembered he was being recorded.

Izuku put the biggest smile he could manage and ran straight up to

the camera, waving as hard as he could, “Hi Mom!”

He was a bit out of breath and knew that Shinso would probably never let him live that down, but the look of frustration on Katsuki’s face as he realized there was nothing he could do made it worth it. The other competitors were starting to trickle in now and Izuku should probably go find Mei and Shinso in the chaos and make sure they made it through, but instead, he had another terrible idea that almost put his impulsive victory to shame.

He noticed Kirishima going up to congratulate Katsuki, which gave him the courage to actually go through with it. Well, that and he’d already gotten himself on Katsuki’s kill list, so he had nothing left to lose, right?

“Oh, and hi Auntie!” Izuku beamed into the camera again. “Can you believe I beat Kacchan?!”

Yep, he was gonna die.

If Katsuki’s quirk affected his eyes instead of his hands, Izuku would have already been dead by the time he hurried over to Mei, who was making a few adjustments on her equipment. Thankfully, though, Izuku had been right in predicting that Kirishima would be able to hold Katsuki back for now. He’d almost definitely be gunning for him next round, but he’d also be gunning for the win, which Izuku could use to his advantage.

Mei glanced up at him as he approached and immediately started cackling, “Izuk-kun! Why didn’t you tell me you were planning on adopting Nedzu’s babies?!”

Izuku grinned, pushing the whole *Katsuki* issue onto the back burner for the moment, “I wasn’t planning on it, but I couldn’t just leave you and Shinso alone in the next round, could I?”

“Extra-Credit-Kun!” Mei yelled. “Where is he? I need to check that his baby is still in optimal condition.”

“It’s still working fine, Mei.”

Both Izuku and Mei jumped a foot in the air as a tired voice suddenly spoke up behind them and Shinso smirked at them momentarily until he was hit full force with one of Mei’s capture nets. His eyes widened as he was wrapped up and he tried too late to dodge and ended up falling to the floor instead, “Ow…”

“Oh, Extra-Credit-Kun! I’m so sorry!” Mei fiddled with some of the controls and the net released, falling into a tangled mess of string and magnets on the ground. “We didn’t even see you!”

Shinso grimaced as he sat up and rubbed at his wrists where the net had wrapped around him, “That was kinda the point, Mei. Eraserhead may have mentioned that stealth was a big part of being an underground hero, so I’ve been practicing.” He glared at them. “I think I need to practice dodging too though if you two are gonna keep trying to attack me.”

“That’s such an awesome idea, Shinso!” Izuku gushed. “The stealth, not the dodging, well, the dodging too, but um…”

Izuku’s rambling was cut off both by Shinso and Mei’s amused looks and by Midnight, who snapped her whip and called their attention back to the stage, “Hello Children! Congratulations to the 42 of you who were strong and fast enough to move onto the next round!”

Izuku shuffled awkwardly. Yeah, he won but he wasn’t really strong or fast. Mostly he’d just relied on the technology that was already there, but...his hacking counted as a strength, right? Maybe he could just pretend that’s what Midnight meant and ignore the fact that she was probably talking about strong muscles and quirks and people like Katsuki and Todoroki.

“Everyone gird your loins and prepare for your next test!” Midnight snapped her whip as the slot machine-like graphic on the screen behind her finally slowed to a stop. “A cavalry battle! Those of you at the top will suffer the most, but then you’ll find that’s the norm here at UA.”

Izuku breathed a small sigh of relief. He had never been at the top of anything in his life! He was just a support student, or like Mic said, an underdog, here, so obviously a quirkless kid like him wasn’t a frontrunner. The top hero students like Katsuki and Todoroki would probably have a pretty hard time in the next round, though.

“Izuku Midoriya won the qualifier!” Midnight snapped her whip at him and Izuku froze. “So he’ll be worth 10 million points in the upcoming round!”

Izuku only paid half attention as Midnight explained the rest of the point values. *He* was at the top?! He supposed it made sense, what with him winning the obstacle course and everything, but...but he was just a quirkless support student? How…?! He was going to die, wasn’t

he? And it wasn't even going to be all Katsuki's fault!

He could feel the bloodlust radiating off the other competitors and it felt like he was on the floor in middle school again, curled up on a ball to protect his stomach and other organs from the beatings. He didn't even see UA students in front of him, just his old classmates jeering about *the quirkless deku, the absolute loser, he'll never be a hero…*

Someone grabbing his hand steaded him and Izuku looked over to see Mei giving him a confident smile as she squeezed his hand reassuringly. He forced himself to take a shaky deep breath and smile back. He could do this. He wasn't alone anymore. He had Mei. He had Shinso. He had his analysis. He could show them all that he wasn't just going to sit down and take it anymore!

Shinso started sidling away from them, making Mei drop Izuku's hand and grab onto his arm, "Just where do you think you're going?"

"Um…" Shinso looked between them. "I was going to find a team?"

"It's ok." Izuku interrupted, "I have a huge target on my back from the 10 million points, so I totally understand if you don't want to work with us, but if you want to work together I think I can make it work…"

"It's not that." Shinso said bitterly. "I'm sure you already have a million ideas, it's just...I wasn't sure if you actually wanted to work with me, what with the sports festival being so public. With my quirk being what it is, going off alone is just a habit at this point. Nobody's ever wanted to be openly associated with the *villain kid,* you know?"

"Shinso." Izuku looked at him seriously. "You're an idiot."

"Gee, thanks." Shinso deadpanned.

Mei moved to hang off Shinso's arm so he couldn't run away, "We're not going to abandon you!" She said dramatically. "You're our baby!"

"Hatsume!" Izuku yelled. "Phrasing!"

Shinso wasn't phased, instead he just glared at her suspiciously, "I legitimately don't know if you mean that like I'm your child, the child that you kidnapped, by the way, or if you're referring to me as one of your inventions and I'm honestly not sure which is worse."

"We didn't kidnap you!" Izuku said indignantly.

The corner of Shinso's mouth quirked up, "You kinda did, actually."

"Doesn't matter!" Mei declared confidently. "It's the second one either way! We made you!"

Shinso raised an eyebrow skeptically and Izuku found himself bursting into laughter.

"She's right, isn't she?" Izuku gasped. "We did make you into who you are now by preparing you for today!"

"I hate both of you." Shinso said, unimpressed.

"Um…" A small voice spoke up and the three of them all turned to see Uraraka standing awkwardly behind them. "Am I interrupting something?"

"Oh, Uraraka!" Izuku grinned. "Shinso, Mei-chan, this is Uraraka! She has a really cool anti-gravity quirk that we used to float the robot I hacked and she's in 1A and…"

Izuku slammed his mouth closed as he realized that Uraraka was starting to blush and he needed to shut up before he revealed exactly how much he knew about her and her classmates. He didn't want to creep out his...potential friend? Maybe? But...

"Um," Izuku shrugged awkwardly, "shouldn't you be looking for a team right about now?"

"Actually, I was wondering if it'd be alright if I teamed up with you?" Uraraka awkwardly picked at the pads on her fingertips. "I mean, I'm friends with Iida, but he said he didn't want to work with friends this round because he wanted to prove himself, which I totally get, but then I thought back to the obstacle course and you're really smart, so…"

Izuku cut her off, "You do know I have 10 million points, right? Everyone will be trying to take me down."

Uraraka nodded as determination filled her eyes, "What better way to prove myself, right? Being a female hero, I'm already trying to beat impossible odds!"

"You're not the only one." Shinso drawled. "That's us, the team of underdogs and targets."

“Speaking of,” Izuku turned to Mei, “are you sure you don’t want to be on another team, Mei-chan? Ten million is a lot of points.”

“Which just means all eyes will be on you!” Mei grinned. “So come on, 10 Million! What’s the plan?”

Izuku looked at their team and analyzed the other teams forming around them, “Shinso will be the rider.”

Shinso’s eyebrows shot up, “You’re joking, right? I’m the biggest one here.”

“Which won’t be a problem once we take Uraraka’s antigravity into account.” Izuku pointed out. “And the rest of us are all around the same height, so if we hold you, it’ll be easy to come up with a balanced formation, but if you’re on the bottom, whoever is the rider will be on two different levels. Plus, it just makes more sense from a publicity standpoint.”

Uraraka frowned at that, “What does publicity have to do with anything?”

“Everything!” Mei piped up. “If Extra-Credit-Kun is the rider, his name will be the one on the screen and it’ll be that much harder to deny that he deserves a place in the hero course when he wins! It’ll also highlight my babies’ ability to support a hero!”

“You’re already in the hero course, Uraraka.” Izuku explained. “So you don’t need to be noticed by the teachers as much as Shinso does, and because we’re support, that’s where we’ll be able to showcase our skills the most.”

Uraraka nodded slowly, “Ok, that makes sense, but what are we going to do about your ten million points?”

Izuku grinned mischievously, “We’re going to get rid of them.”

Chapter End Notes

Do you guys like petty Izuku?

Memorable

Chapter Summary

The cavalry battle begins!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Kain wants Abeels blood
Panda's just here
Let bees hibernate
The pancake dream

Memes!
X X X

Uraraka watched nervously as Hitoshi tied the headband across his forehead, “And you’re *sure* that modifying the headband isn’t going to get us disqualified?”

“Eighty-two percent sure, yeah.” Mei responded, tightening the hoverboots onto Uraraka’s feet

“Nowhere in the rules does it say we’re not allowed to mess with the headbands.” Izuku said confidently. “And honestly, considering the set-up of the sports festival, we’re actively *encouraged* to use quirks and support items on them, so as long as we keep it visible in accordance with what Midnight said, we should be fine!”

Hitoshi put a sympathetic hand on Uraraka’s shoulder. It was going to take some time for her to get used to the way his kidnappers did things, but she was doing remarkably well so far, considering the circumstances.

“Just go along with it.” He shrugged. “My kidnappers are hardly ever wrong, and if something happens, well...Midoriya is Nedzu’s favorite, so he’ll let him get away with anything.”

“That’s not…” Midoriya blushed bright red and tried to hide his face. “He doesn’t like me *that* much! And he’s the principal, so he *has* to be unbiased. And for the last time, we didn’t kidnap you Shinso!!!”

“Sounds fake, but ok.” Hitshosi smirked and elbowed Uraraka until she started giggling.

“Well,” Uraraka shook her head in disbelief, “even if this goes horribly wrong, it’ll definitely be interesting!”

“That’s the spirit, Floaty Girl!” Mei grinned and stood. “The true goal of the sports festival is *marketing,* so even more than winning, our goal is to be *memorable!”*

“Oh, they’re definitely going to remember us.” Hitoshi said dryly. “It’s just a question of whether or not that’s a good thing.”

Uraraka was about to say something else, but they were interrupted by Midnight taking the stage again, “Riders! Mount your Horses!”

Hitoshi watched as Mei’s crazed smile got slightly more wild and both Midoirya and Uraraka got scarily determined looks on their faces. He still wasn’t quite sure how he’d ended up with friends like these, but he couldn’t help but be grateful he was on their side. As much as Midoriya might try to deny it, they really were impossible to stop once they set their minds on something.

It was weird being the rider as the tallest member of the group. He understood where Midoriya was coming from with the more consistent heights being better for the horses, and Uraraka’s quirk made it so that his weight wasn’t an issue, but still...Hitoshi carefully put on a bored expression and leaned back slightly so that it looked like he was a king lunging on his throne. He could feel Midoriya chuckling beneath him and couldn’t resist smirking.

This was gonna be fun.

“Is everybody ready?!?!?!” Mic yelled.

The crowd screamed in response and Hitoshi felt his team shift underneath him as the other teams prepared to charge them.

Midnight cracked her whip and everyone lept into action, “Begin!”

Hitoshi’s team immediately lunged *forward,* which caused a few teams to stumble back in shock, considering that, if one didn’t have Midoriya as a strategist on their team, the most logical move would usually be to run away. Instead, Hitoshi’s team ran straight for Bakugo’s.

In one fluid movement, Hitoshi whipped the headband off his head and threw it at Bakugo, whose eyes widened as the fabric started floating up and away without any gravity to hold it, “Have fun, Kacchan!”

“Is…” Mic’s confused voice echoed through the stadium. “Is that allowed?”

“Technically.” Eraserhead sounded almost amused, which Hitoshi hadn’t really thought was possible. “Though it remains to be seen whether it’s an intelligent move. On the one hand, getting rid of the ten million points immediately means they are no longer the main target, but on the other hand, it means they now have zero points. Having Uraraka remove the headband’s gravity was a nice touch though.”

“It’ll definitely add another *dimension* to this fight!” Mic yelled, hyping up the crowd. “Team Bakugo is gonna have their work cut out for them trying to keep those points from *floating away!!!”*

“Stupid purple bastard!” Bakugo looked practically ready to explode, even as that tape guy from 1A, Sero, used his quirk to grab the headband out of the air before another team could. “Deku!!”

“Drop it, Bakugo.” The rock dude, Kirishima yelled. “We got the points now, so like Mic-sensei said, we gotta focus on keeping them!”

Hitoshi almost thought Bakugo was going to go after them anyway, but he just tched and turned away to combat that ice and fire guy who was going after the ten million point headband, “Only Deku would be useless enough to throw away points like that.”

“Why I outta…” Mei growled.

“Mei-chan, that’s the plan, remember?” Midoriya interrupted. “We want Katsuki to underestimate us. We want *everyone* to underestimate us. Our job for the rest of the game is to disappear into the background!”

“Well, that and mess with everyone to get as many points as possible.” Hitoshi added. “Speaking of which...Hey monkey boy! Do you even *have* any points?”

“Shinso!” Midoriya squealed. “Don’t be rude!”

Hitoshi just shrugged as Ojiro, if he was remembering Midoriya’s analyses correctly, turned toward him with a scowl, “More than you. Our team isn’t stupid enough to just give up our points.”

“We’ll see about that.”

Hitoshi couldn't hold back a smirk, but didn't take control of Ojiro just yet. Holding off on taking control was still difficult, but Midoirya had been right, it was getting much easier with practice. Plus, it was easier if he had fun with it. Hitoshi stared at Ojiro for a few seconds before raising his hands slowly, widening his smile slightly for maximum creep factor

The other team was starting to get visibly nervous. One of the other members, a short boy that Hitoshi thought was in 1B tugged on Ojrio's sleeve, "Come on, let's just go and get some other points, these guys don't have anything."

"Oh really?" Hitoshi shifted his foot to signal to the rest of his team to get ready to move, then suddenly closed his fists on thin air and yanked, using the jetpack that Mei had given him to close the distance between their teams as he finally let himself take full control of Ojiro, "Hand over your points."

The rest of the team was still off balance from the little show he'd put on, so no one was fast enough to stop a dead-eyed Ojiro from handing over his headband. Hitoshi released his control almost immediately and their team simply used their momentum to carry on down the field, leaving a very confused group of hero students to wonder *how* exactly they had just lost all their points.

"Shinso…" Midoriya said shakily, "Remind me never to come across you in a dark alley."

Hitoshi couldn't help laughing. From anyone else, a comment like that would rub him the wrong way. It was those kinds of comments he got all the time from his classmates or foster siblings, but from Izuku, it just didn't seem as mean-spirited. "You're one to talk. How are your murder notebooks coming along?"

"They're not *murder notebooks!"* Izuku squawked. "Uraraka, don't let Shinso scare you. My notebooks are just analyses of a couple people's quirks…"

"Along with their strengths, weaknesses, and what babies we could use to destroy them!" Mei finished gleefully. "They're amazing!"

Uraraka's eyes were wide and she looked slightly overwhelmed, which Hitoshi found extremely amusing. He almost felt bad, but then he remembered his first day of being kidnapped by the chaos duo and figured he'd earned the right to laugh, "Alright, enough scaring the one hero course student willing to team up with us. Who are we going

after next?"

Their group looked around the field. Bakugo still had the ten million point headband, but Todoroki's team was giving him a run for his money, considering that a good half of the field was now covered in ice. Several teams had gotten caught up in the crossfire and were currently frozen to the ground, which Hitoshi planned on taking full advantage of.

Izuku's face lit up as he came to the same conclusion, "So Shinso...how do you feel about a captive audience?"

"I think I can give it a try…"Hitoshi smirked. "Our best best is to go after the lowest point values first, right? Quantity over quality?"

"Right!" Izuku smiled. "That way, we stay under the radar and don't risk catching the attention of the frontrunners."

"That seems kinda sneaky…" Uraraka said nervously.

"Oh, it is." Izuku agreed. "But heroes like Edgshot have gotten to the top of the ranks by being sneaky. Sometimes what decides a fight isn't someone's strength, but what weaknesses their opponent is willing to take advantage of."

"Hence why we're taking advantage of everyone's hyperfocus on the ten million points, especially during this first part of our plan." Hatsume said. "Ooh! Who's first?"

"What about that team from 1B?" Hitoshi suggested. "Midoriya, quirks?"

"Limb separation, glue, and quite literally speaking words into existence." Midoriya responded. "Good choice! Just make sure you don't only focus on the rider, because while she could steal the headband back by detaching a hand or something, in this case the horses are objectively the biggest threat to our mobility."

Hitoshi nodded and they made their way over to their next target, "Hey, uh, do you need help?"

"Uh…" The girl looked at her teammates hesitantly, probably nervous about their kindness being a trap. It was, of course, but she obviously didn't know that she'd already fallen into it.

"It's no big deal!" Hitoshi said kindly. "I mean, we're not hero

students, so we aren't really planning on getting that far in the festival, you know?"

The kid in the front, the one with the glue quirk if Hitoshi was right, visibly relaxed, "Ok, cool. Yeah, we could really use the help if you're not gonna steal our headband or anything."

"Don't worry!" Mei piped up happily. "We're not gonna *steal* it!"

Uraraka elbowed her and shot her a warning look, but Hitoshi was already deciding what red herring to use this time. He leaned over and grabbed the other rider's shoulder, "Sorry, I just need to steady myself so I don't fall. Um, Mei's got this new flamethrower she wants to try out…" He turned to the last member of the other team, "You're not afraid of fire are you?"

"No," the guy didn't really have a head in the traditional sense, but he seemed like he was shaking the emoji currently floating above his shoulders, "just be careful!"

"Of course!" HItoshi grinned and leaned down to grab both of the horses shoulders. "Oh, and thanks by the way!"

He took control of all three of them, letting out a sigh of relief as the pressure in his skull decreased, "Give us your headband. Oh and Mei, can you melt them out. We *did* promise, after all!"

Mei laughed and used a surprisingly tame stream of fire to melt the ice around their feet as Hitoshi tied the headband around his head and turned back to the team, "You won't notice your headband is gone until at least one minute has passed."

He wasn't 100% sure that order would do anything, but if he could modify memories, then modifying attention should be theoretically possible as well, right? They'd have to see.

Once they were melted out, he let his quirk go and held his breath as they blinked back to life, looking slightly disoriented as the rider skimmed her eyes over Hitoshi's forehead, her own headband clearly visible on it. Hitoshi held his breath.

She smiled, "Thanks for the help!"

The corners of Hitoshi's mouth twitched, "No problem!"

He could feel his teammates shaking in silent laughter underneath

them as they walked away and broke, “I cannot believe that actually worked!”

“I was thinking *why is he releasing his control so quickly?!*” Izuku gasped in laugher. “That was awesome!”

“I seriously thought we were dead!” Uraraka giggled. “Oh my goodness! That was a rush!”

“Next victim!” Mei yelled in excitement. “Onward!”

Izuku couldn’t keep the smile off his face as they wandered around and started freeing teams that had been encased in Todoroki’s ice. Shinso was doing really well at changing up the fake activation requirements for his quirk with every headband they took and beside him, Uraraka was gradually getting more and more confused. They had decided against telling her about the verbal response requirement both so that she wouldn’t have an unfair advantage if she and Shinso fought in the next round and so that they would be able to tell if Shinso's redirection was actually working.

Judging by the almost constipated expression on her face as Shinso literally *serenaded* one of the teams, it was working exactly as well as they’d hoped.

“So,” Izuku said happily. “Have you figured out how Shinso activates his quirk yet?”

“Uh…” Uraraka looked at the team that was currently handing over their headbands. “Maybe eye contact?”

“Hmm…I don’t know...” Izuku grinned mischievously and turned to look at her, which is how he almost missed the dark figure lunging at them.

“Oh shit!” Shinso immediately activated the jet pack and Uraraka kicked on her hover boots so they could get out of range, but that didn’t stop the shadow from ripping off two of their headbands.

The team they were currently facing had two 1B students and a 1A student, but all three of them had animal-type mutations, which is probably what formed the common ground for them to have the confidence to team up. There was a girl with a horse-like mutation and a guy with a mantis mutation, but their biggest problem currently was the 1A student with a bird mutation.

“Note to self.” Izuku muttered. “Dark Shadow is apparently *fully* sentient.”

“Yeah, Izu-kun, I think we figured that out.” Mei griped.

“What did you do to Fumikage?!” Dark Shadow yelled and swiped at them again, forcing them to take to the air to dodge, not that that would work for long.

“Um, ok, weak to light!” Izuku’s brain raced and he started mumbling as Mei whipped out her flamethrower to keep Dark Shadow at bay. “So, apparently he has his own consciousness? Or maybe his own area in Tokoyami’s brain? That’s probably most likely, but there’s obviously some kind of separation between the two…”

“Don’t care about the quirk theory right now, Izuku!” Shinso yelled. “Can I brainwash it? Because with the way it’s thrashing, Tokoyami’s gonna wake up any minute!”

Izuku jumped, “Yes! That’s a great idea!”

Shinso shook his head and huffed in frustration, “Wonderful. Great help. Thanks. Hey bird brain! Your other half must be pretty weak if he fell to a wimp like me, huh?”

Dark Shadow almost doubled in size as he lunged at them, “Don’t you talk about Fumikage that way!!!”

They all flinched as Dark Shadow swiped at them, only to stop short inches from Hitoshi’s face, eyes wide as he fell fully under Hitoshi’s control. They all exchanged glances and started giggling uncontrollably.

“Oh my gosh…” Uraraka gasped. “That was *way* too close…”

“Agreed.” Mei laughed. “I almost thought he was gonna break my babies!!!”

“Ok…” Hitoshi shook his head. “Crisis averted...for now…Wow, that is some quirk, I almost wish we had it on *our* team…”

“I mean, you kinda do at this point right?” Uraraka asked. “Or does your quirk not work that long.”

Izuku looked between Uraraka and Shinso, then smiled and shrugged, “I mean...why not?”

“That’s rude, Midoriya.” Shinso grumbled. “I’m not just gonna take control of a whole other team!”

“As long as we leave them enough points to pass, they’ll be fine.” Mei dismissed. “And you can give them back control for the last few minutes anyway!”

There was a moment of tense silence before Shinso sighed, “Get as many headbands as you can safely.”

The mutant team rushed to obey Shinso’s orders and he shook his head, “If this bites us in the ass, I’m blaming the hero.”

Uraraka squaked indignantly, “Hey!”

“Go ahead.” Izuku smiled. “You’d just be blaming yourself too, or are you forgetting that *you’re* going to be a hero by the end of this?”

Shinso blushed slightly and looked out over the teams that still had points, “Um…What about that guy from 1A? The one with the arms? Wait…did somebody already take his headband? And is he allowed to be on his own team like that?”

“No.” Izuku said firmly. “My guess is that there’s at least one other student hiding inside that tent he’s making with his arms and based on size and the assumption it’s a 1A student, my best guess is Mineta.”

To their surprise, that got a groan from Uraraka, “Do we have to? Mineta’s such a pervert, I don’t even want to go near him…”

“Oh come on, Uraraka, I’m sure he’s not *that* bad…” Izuku said.

Uraraka huffed, “Whatever, let’s just get this over with…”

They made their way toward the compact team and Izuku could vaguely see Mineta leaning to peak out between Shoji’s arms, “Oh my goodness, Shoji, look! They’ve got two of the curviest girls in here! Who knew support babes had such bangin’ bodies?!”

Izuku almost froze in shock. Sure, Mineta was theoretically whispering, but they could still *hear him!*

Uraraka groaned, “See why no girls wanted to team up with him?”

“Hey, Shoji, right?” Shinso called out. “You seem like a nice guy, why pair up with an incel like that?”

Shoji muttered something that Izuku couldn't hear, but it was obviously enough for Hitoshi if his slight smirk was any indication.

"Ooh, they've got headbands!" Mineta yelled. "Get 'em!"

Izuku's team shuffled backwards as a *tongue* emerged from the space inside Shoji's arms.

"Tsu?!" Uraraka sounded betrayed. "You're seriously teaming up with the *grape?!?!"*

"Shoji's got good defense." A voice croaked out.

Tsu sent out her tongue again and Izuku panicked for a moment as he realized they weren't going to be able to dodge again. To his surprise, however, Mei lunged forward and grabbed the tongue as it was reaching for their points, wrapping it around her arm like it was a stubborn piece of rope, "I got her! Hurry Shinso!"

"Whoa!" Mineta poked his head out and was practically salivating. "I'm not usually into muscular girls but *damn!* Do you think she could crush me between her thighs?"

Izuku's whole body tensed and he suddenly wanted nothing more than to steal this guy's points and make him regret ever looking at a woman. How dare he talk about Mei like that! She'd worked hard for those muscles! And besides, she was *right there!* It was like he didn't even care about the girls hearing him talking about them like that!

"You better be careful Mineta!" Uraraka's yell cut through the odd haze of rage and other unidentifiable emotions blurring Izuku's brain. "You don't know what Shinso's quirk is and for all you know, it activates by *punching you in the face!!!"*

Izuku and Hitoshi both froze and looked at each other, before Hitoshi got a wicked look on his face. As long as he was punched *before* Hitoshi officially took control, the pain theoretically shouldn't break their connection and if it did...well, at least they'd have punched a pervert in the face, right?

"Hey grape boy." Hitoshi called out. "Do you want me to give you her number? I heard she really likes making babies!"

"Extra-Credit-Kun!" Mei yelled.

"Yes!" Mineta almost unseated himself in his eagerness as their team

hovered off the ground and flew at him with all the speed that Shinso's jetpack could manage. His eyes widened as he realized too late that he wasn't going to be getting Mei's number.

Hitoshi shook out his hand as he took control of both Mineta and Shoji, "That was weirdly satisfying, Now give us your points."

Tsu tried to prevent Mineta from handing them over, but Mei simply yanked on her tongue and threw her off balance for long enough for them to get the points and get away. They rushed to put some distance between them as Tsu got her tongue back and smacked Mineta, loosening Hitoshi's control. It probably wouldn't be too long until Shoji broke through as well, especially since Hitoshi was starting to get tired.

Izuku checked in with the other teams. Todoroki had at some point gotten the 10 million point headband from Bakugo's team, but the two were currently fighting to try and reverse that, not that it would matter much in a few minutes. Bakugo's original headband was gone and Izuku noticed that one of the 1B teams was pursuing a similar strategy and working on building up the small points. The mutant team that Hitoshi was controlling had gained a good number of headbands and was currently eyeing Todoroki's headband, which wouldn't be good since the resulting fight would knock them out of HItoshi's control.

He looked at the clock and grinned. Almost two minutes left, which meant it was time to move onto the next phase of their strategy. "Shinso, call back Dark Shadow's team."

Hitoshi nodded and yelled the order and the team he was controlling immediately turned around and made their way toward them, "Alright, how many points do we want to keep?"

"For this to work, I'd say we need half the points on the board, not counting the 10 million." Izuku said. "Which headbands do they have?"

Tokoyami robotically spread out the headbands they'd collected and Hitoshi did the same with his. Mei quickly grabbed the ones they needed and shoved them into Hitoshi's hands, letting Dark Shadow keep the rest.

"Alright, are we ready?" Mei asked.

"Ready as we'll ever be." Uraraka said. "I still think this strategy is

insane."

"Oh, definitely." Izuku responded. "But remember, the goal isn't just to win…"

Hitoshi released his control on everyone he was still controlling and Mei laughed madly as she took out a small remote and detonated the tiny explosives they'd planted on the ten million point headband at the beginning of the game. The headband had been floating in the air halfway in between the two frontrunners, while both Yaoyorozu and sero tried to use a whip and tape, respectively, to grab it and keep it from floating away to the atmosphere. The instant Mei pressed the button, flames rushed over it, leaving nothing more than pieces of ash and fabric floating down as a loud silence filled the stadium.

Izuku smiled, "The goal is to be memorable."

Scramble

Chapter Summary

Fasten your seatbelts and enjoy the ride!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hatzui
KatChicken
Cryoud

Memes!
X X X

assumed that getting the target off their backs and going after the small point values had been the extent of those crazy kids' plan. Apparently he still needed to learn his lesson about not underestimating the support course.

Or maybe just not underestimating Nedzu's protege.

Hizashi grinned widely and shook his head in disbelief as both of them turned their attention to the teams still on the field. "For those of you still catching up, that *insane* powerplay has put team Shinso in the lead with almost *half* the remaining points. Teams Monoma and Tokoyami are next up, followed by team Todoroki. Everybody else has got practically zilch! So much for Team Shinso's plan to not be a target! With almost two minutes left on the clock, how are they going to survive!?!"

They weren't.

Honestly, if Deku had to resort to dirty tricks like blowing up points to win, he at least should have been smart enough to do it at the last minute so no one had time to recover. But as it was, Deku was an idiot and had the most points on the board, which meant it was time for him to die.

"Come on, extras." Katsuki growled to his team, which immediately started charging toward Deku along with what looked like every other team on the field, not that that mattered. Deku was his. "I'm gonna kill you Deku!"

Except for the fact that Deku was gone.

"What's this?!" Mic's voice screamed above the noise of the crowd, who seemed to be eating up the last minute upset. "Team Shinso has taken to the air!!! Are they…"

"Yes, they are allowed to do that." Aizawa sighed. "Honestly, it's probably their only viable strategy, now that everyone is being forced to scramble for last minute points."

Viable strategy?! Yeah right, like he'd let a little thing like gravity keep him from beating Deku to the ground. Katsuki didn't hesitate for a second before blasting off and rocketing toward the damn nerd's team to teach him a lesson about daring to humiliate him!

"Hitoshi!" Deku smirked at him, *smirked,* as he yelled to that useless

gen-ed extra on his team. “Now!”

Suddenly there was a snap and Bakugo was wrapped in metal-like ribbons or something and before he knew it, he was being flung back to earth.

“And *that,* folks, is why it pays to have a good relationship with the support course!” Mic yelled. “That’s one rockin’ support item! Kinda reminds me of yours, Eraser!”

“Bakubro!” Shitty Hair yelled, “Come on Sero! Catch him!”

He was wrapped up for the second time that minute, this time in tape, and pulled back to his team, “That’s it. Deku *definitely* has to die.”

“What’s going on?” Pony screamed, her voice wavering in barely concealed panic.

Tokoyami shook his head and his eyes widened as he realized there were two different teams charging straight toward them, “What a mad banquet of darkness…”

“Being edgy isn’t helping, dude!” Kamakiri shouted, blades already popping from his skin as he prepared to fight. “What the hell just happened?!”

The last thing that he remembered clearly, they had been engaged in some sort of psychological warfare with Uraraka’s team, but then everything went hazy. He had been vaguely aware of a sense of panic when he had lost control of an enraged Dark Shadow, and then seemed to remember going after other teams?

Pony haphazardly shot her horns at the approaching teams, forcing them to dodge and lose valuable time, “How many points do we have?”

“Uh…” Kamakiri glanced up at the board, “I think we’re in third place right now? No wonder everyone’s coming after us!”

“The purple one brainwashed us!” Dark Shadow yelled, swiping at some vines with his claws. “I’m sorry Fumikage! I tried to save you!”

“All is well, Dark Shadow. The agents of chaos have deigned to leave us enough points to stay in the running.” Tokoyami stared down their new opponents. “Our challenge now is to keep them.”

“Idiots, all of them.” Monoma said haughtily. “We don’t even need any more points at this point, unlike those 1A frontrunners.”

“Well, yeah…” Tsuburaba said, slightly out of breath. “But now we’re the prey, not the hunters.”

Kuroiro nodded in agreement, “We can no longer stay in the shadows.”

“Well, then…” Monoma smiled and reached out to copy a quirk from one of the 1A students trying to attack them . “I suppose we’ll just have to shine, then.”

Testsutestsu hardened his body again, his skin glinting in the sunlight as he looked down at him his team, “Everyone good on the plan?”

“God be willing, this will grant us success” Shiozaki nodded soberly.

“What she said.” Awase agreed. “But if this doesn’t work, we’re screwed.”

“Alright!” Tetstutetsu grinned. “Charge!”

They lunged forward and Shiozaki used all her vines to restrain Dark Shadow while Honenuki softened the ground underneath Team Tokoyami into a quicksand-like consistency. Their team quickly began sinking and Tetstutetsu did his best to block as many horns and blades as he could with his hardened skin so that Awase could get close enough to Pony to meld her horns to her head.

“No!” Pony yelled and tried to slap them away, but Tetsutetsu was already reaching toward Tokoyami’s headbands.

“Don’t you dare steal Fumikage’s points!” Dark Shadow roared and broke through the layer of vines that had been holding him back.

Tetsutetsu’s eyes widened and he was about to retreat and call the whole thing a loss when a laser suddenly shot past them, reflecting blindingly off his hardened skin. Dark Shadow whimpered, shrinking in on himself almost instinctively. It wasn’t much of an opening, but that split second was enough for Tetsutetsu to grab some points and run away.

“Seriously, dude?” Tsuburaba sounded distinctly unimpressed. “You really need to work on your aim. That laser didn’t even go *near* the

teams we're actually fighting!"

Monoma cradled his stomach and swallowed a mouthful of bile, "Yeah, well, I'd like to see you try to aim a laser from your stomach when it feels like you're about to explode."

"Oui!" The stupid 1A french wannabee winked at them. "My quirk is tres difficult, non? That's why I need this stylish belt!"

"Not the time, Aoyama!" The monkey boy glared at Monoma and tried to grab at his points, but Monoma simply copied Tsuburaba's quirk and made himself a shield of solid air, trapping monkey boy's hand in it for long enough that they could retreat.

He glanced up at the board as the pain in his stomach finally started to subside. Still in the top three. Not bad for 1B.

Hitoshi panted as he had to use his weapon to rebuff Bakugo *again,* "Wow, this guy really doesn't know when to give up, does he?"

"That's Bakugo for you." Uraraka looked like she was starting to get nauseous, but she'd assured them at the beginning that while keeping them airborne for that long would be challenging, she'd be able to do it.

"Yeah, Katsuki's always been like that." Izuku rolled his eyes. "Even though it'd be smarter to go after some of the other teams, he sees my very existence as a personal challenge to his superiority."

"Well, you *were* making more direct challenges earlier." Mei pointed out. "So, I mean, you can't really say you're *surprised."*

"Heh…" Izuku chuckled, "I guess that's true, isn't it? Oh, looks like he's getting ready to try again"

"I, uh, I appreciate the whole teamwork aspect, Bakugo, but, uh…" Sero looked at him skeptically. "Are you really sure this is gonna work? Seems kinda crazy..."

"Come on!" Katsuki flexed his hands as Sero loaded the tape balls into them. "I'd like to see Deku resist boiling acid to the face! And with shark-face up there with me to take the brunt of eye-bag's weapon attack, there's nothing those extras will be able to do!"

"I dunno, man…" Kirishima said slowly. "Seems kinda violent."

“I think it’s a great plan!” Mina cheered. “And we’ve got, like, less than a minute, so, uh…blast off you two!”

“I’m sorry, Fumikage.” Dark Shadow purred contritely after he finally managed to pry their team from the mud. “We don’t have enough points anymore…”

“It’s not too late!” Kamakiri pointed out. “What about that one team from your class, the ice one? Think we can take them?”

“Uh…” Fumikage looked at Dark Shadow, who gave him a thumbs up. “They are as powerful as demons, but when one has nothing to lose, they must deal with devils.”

Pony looked a little lost, “…is that a yes?”

“Looks like dear old *Kacchan* is switching things up and bringing a friend.” Hitoshi said. “What’s the other guy’s quirk?”

“Rocks.” Izuku answered. “I didn’t expect Katsuki to actually work *with* his teammates, unless of course he just took off without warning and Kirishima just didn’t have a chance to let go…”

“No time to second guess things, Izu-kun!” Mei grinned and adjusted her flamethrower. “We’ve got incoming!”

Hitoshi shot his capture weapon toward Bakugo, but at the last minute, Kirishima let go of Bakugo’s ankles and latched onto the capture weapon. He hardened and swung on the ribbon like Tarzan and the sudden unexpected weight made their whole team suddenly lurch toward the ground. By the time that Hitoshi and Uraraka were able to get them back on balance, Katsuki was already in their faces, throwing balls of…was that Sero’s tape?

“Mei! Flamethrower!”

“Let us charge into battle!” Fumikage cried.

The team didn’t move, “Um…”

“Go!!!” Dark Shadow shouted.

They rushed toward Todoroki’s team, who had been using a combination of ice and Iida’s engine quirk to stay out of range and

keep the points they had collected. Dark Shadow stretched behind them and started wrapping around to force Todoroki's team into a close range battle and keep them from running away.

"Kaminari!" Todoroki ordered cooly, pulling some sort of sheet over himself. "Attack!"

Sero wrapped a length of tape around Kirishima's waist and pulled him back to the team, "Good work dude."

"Thanks." Kirishima gave a sharp toothed grin. "How's plan B going?"

Mina held out a couple of headbands, "It won't be *enough,* but I managed to burn a bunch of those crazy vines and Sero used his tape to grab some of the headbands from that metal guy's team while you were gone. Do you think Bakugo'll actually be able to pull this plan off?"

Kirishima shrugged and turned back toward the aerial battle, "Well, I wouldn't underestimate either of them."

Mei blasted the flamethrower at the tape balls right as Katsuki set off an explosion. Some of them vaporized entirely, while the rest splashed a suspicious pink liquid over everyone.

"Owww!" Uraraka rubbed at her arms frantically. "You filled Sero's tape with Ashido's acid? Really Bakugo?!"

"Fuck that hurts…" Hitoshi grimaced and was busy wiping acid from his face when a hand suddenly emerged from the smoke and snatched away most of their headbands. "Hey!!! Izuku! Bakugo got our points!"

"Shit!" Izuku rushed to tally the points in his head. "How many did he get?"

"More than half!" Hitoshi answered. "Hey Blasty! What do you think you're doing!"

"No time!" Mei messed with something on her tool belt and launched it at Bakugo. "Take this!!!"

Bakugo's eyes widened as he was tangled in one of Mei's capture nets and started to fall. A line of tape reached to grab him and Izuku tugged at Uraraka's sleeve, "We need to remove his gravity! If he gets back to his team with all our points, we won't move on!"

“Extra-Credit-Kun!” Mei yelled. “Full blast on the jetpack! Everyone hold on tight!”

“Ugh!” Hitoshi groaned but had a smile on his face as he adjusted the jetpack controls. “I hate this family!”

“Kamakiri!” Tokoyami cried. “The time is now!”

Kamakiri grinned as he threw a chain of his blades at Kaminari. He wouldn’t have normally thought of using his uniform shirt to tie them together, but when Tokoyami said they would need a way to counteract Kaminari’s electricity, his first instinct was to create a lightning rod with his blades. Thankfully his aim was true enough that he managed to stab Kaminari in the arm seconds into his attack and the otherwise disabling attack was channelled into his blades and flowed harmlessly into the ground as their team kept advancing.

“Onward!” Pony yelled. “For loss!”

Dark Shadow reached for the headbands on Todoroki’s neck, flinching back slightly when there was a brief splutter of fire, but pushing forward when it died after only half a second, “I think you mean for victory!”

“Oh, right. For victory!!!”

Uraraka swallowed down the vomit that was threatening to come up as she pushed herself and her quirk to the limit. She grimaced as she grabbed onto the capture net with all five fingers. It would have been better to make *Bakugo* weightless, but with seconds left on the clock, she’d take what she could get. Bakugo tried to force her way with explosions and she could feel the net jerking away from her as Sero pulled at his tape, but with the angle he was trapped at Bakugo couldn’t use his quirk to propel himself, which put their team at an advantage.

“Thanks, Kacchan.” Midoriya reached past her and yanked away as many headbands as he could. “Have a nice fall!”

Hizashi waited with baited breath as the last few seconds ticked away, “And that’s time!!! Wowza! In all my years I really don’t think I’ve seen a more intense final few minutes, have you Eraser? I thought the free for all was normally at the *beginning* of the match!!!”

“Well normally, more than half the points aren’t obliterated with two minutes to go.” Shouta said dryly.

He looked out over the stadium. The crowds were eating up the twists and turns to the battle, which had to be good for their ratings and, by extension, good for UA’s publicity. Sero had just barely managed to reel Bakugo in without him touching the ground, and Shinso’s team was shielding Uraraka from the cameras as she finally released her quirk and the contents of her stomach. Tokoyami was doing well at interclass bonding, it seemed, as he and his teammates patted each other on the back and counted up the points they’d stolen at the last minute and the team from 1B looked smug that they were the only team that had actually managed to *keep* all the points they’d stolen by the time the 10 million point headband was taken out of play.

“What’s this?!?!” Hizashi yelled, hyping up the crowd as the scoreboard readjusted itself to reflect the final totals. “It looks like a good mix of students will be moving on! In first place, we have team Monoma from class 1B! Then Team Shinso with students from support, gen-ed, and class 1A. Next place is team Bakugo from class 1A, with their impressive teamwork! Finally, in fourth Place is...Team Tokoyami with some points stolen at the very end!!! Oh, and because Team Tokoyami only has three members, one person from Team Tetsutetsu will be moving on as well! I guess you could say that this year is the year of the underdogs!!!”

Shouta looked down at the field again. The teams that had moved on were laughing, crying, and celebrating, but he was paying more attention to Todoroki, who was looking down at his hands and appeared to be in shock. Shouta knew he was imagining it, but he could almost feel the heat from Endeavor in the stands as he realized that his son wouldn’t be moving onto the final found. To Shouta’s memory it wasn’t the first time that the strongest student had failed to make it to the one-on-one battles, but it was rare enough to be notable and he couldn’t help but feel that his husband’s observation, however dramatic, was correct.

This was the year of the underdogs.

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Connections

Chapter Summary

The break between the second and third rounds.

Chapter Notes

Art!
qubril X X
Fandomkitty8
Rain
Banilla Void
I'm totally a bee
Bees Playing Kazoos X
loserland
Bee BoyX

Also, may I just say that I adore when fandoms just go off on their own? Cheat Code is support and therefore does not have a hero costume, but a bunch of creative people on my discord decided to design him one anyway.
Theojack16 X
Rain

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X
More memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shoto felt numb. Not that he ever let himself feel much to begin with, but everything just seemed so out of focus and the crowds were quieter than they should have been. How had he lost?

“Um, Todoroki?” Momo put a hand on his shoulder and it was all that Shoto could do not to flinch. “Are you ok?”

“I’ll be fine.” Shoto said firmly. He *had* to be fine. If he were to show anything but the utmost composure on television, Endeavor’s punishment would probably be even worse. Not that he was looking forward to the increased training that would undoubtedly follow his failure, but...he’d endured this much. He could handle a little more if it meant rising to the top without *his* power. “I apologize for losing our points.”

“It’s not…” Momo hesitated. “I mean, yes, that’s very unfortunate and I’m not happy about losing either, but that’s not what I was asking. Um, do you need to see Recovery Girl?”

Shouto turned to her, slightly raising an eyebrow, “Why would I need to see Recovery Girl?”

“Um…” Momo hesitated. “The burns?”

Shouto’s eyes widened slightly in shock. He’d only activated his fire for a split second out of instinct before he’d realized what he was doing and snuffed them out, but that shouldn’t have been nearly enough to burn him especially

“It’s just that with what Bakugo pulled with Ashido’s acid, a lot of us have chemical burns, so we’re all going together!” Momo explained. “Those tape grenades kinda exploded everywhere, you know? We’re just lucky that Ashido didn’t make the acid strong enough to do any *real* damage.”

“Oh.” Shouto looked down at himself, noticing for the first time that there were holes burned into his uniform from where Ashido’s acid had splattered over the field as it fell. Sure enough, there were a few small burns trailing along his arms, but the pain wasn’t anything more than what he was used to from his normal *training.* “I hadn’t noticed.”

“Understandable!” Iida joined the conversation, arms already swinging as he spoke. “The adrenaline in our systems was more than enough to keep us from noticing until the game was over as well! However, I believe that it is best to get these wounds, however minor they may be, taken care of quickly so we can focus on learning from the next rounds!”

Shouto thought about that for a moment. On the one hand, his father would consider going to the nurse for something so minor as a sign of weakness, but on the other...even if Endeavor managed to shove his way back into the student areas, he wouldn’t do anything to cause a scene if there were other people around. If only he’d used his fire…

Shouto stomped down on that thought the moment it popped into his head. No. He wouldn’t become like that bastard by using his power. In fact...Shouto forced himself to take a breath and almost smiled as a thought occurred to him. His father had failed too. He’d failed to become number one. Losing here just meant that he was better at failing than his father could ever be.

He hoped the bastard enjoyed what he'd created.

Izuku grinned at Mei and Shinso as Midnight cracked her whip to draw their attention to the screen where the brackets were laid out. They all had bandages covering various parts of their arms and faces from the cavalry battle, since Recovery Girl had insisted on only healing the worst of the damage so they wouldn't be too exhausted to do well in the rest of the festival. Izuku had even managed to get her autograph, even though Mei and Hitoshi hadn't stopped teasing him about geeking out over the school nurse. It was so weird having a friendship that included teasing that wasn't intended to hurt like the bullying he'd grown up with.

Izuku still couldn't believe they had actually done it! They'd gotten Shinso into the one on one rounds, which meant that they were one step closer to getting him into the hero course. All the training they'd done was paying off and they were now in the perfect situation for Hitoshi to really show the teachers that he deserved that spot!

Everyone was silent for a moment as they looked at the lineup.

"I'm fighting Pony Tsunatori…" Hitoshi muttered quietly… "She was on the team we took control of, right?"

"Yep!" Izuku said happily. "That'll be an interesting match. She's an exchange student, so the language barrier might make using your quirk more interesting. We haven't experimented with other languages yet, have we?"

"Nope!" Mei piped up. "But if worse comes to worst, he can always use my babies!"

"Wonderful." Hitoshi grumbled. "Who have you got, Midoriya?"

Midoriya started as he suddenly realized that *he* was going onto the one on one fights as well. Somehow, he'd been so focused on getting Hitoshi into the third round that he'd completely forgotten that being on the same team meant that he'd made it as well. He frantically searched the screen for his name, crossing his fingers that he wouldn't have to face Katsuki right off the bat.

"Umm, where…? Mina Ashido! Acid quirk" Izuku grimaced. "At least it won't be boiling this time…"

"Yeah, that sucked!" Mei said, tugging at one of the bandages on her

arm. “Izu-kun! What’s Monoma’s quirk again?”

“Oh, his is a lot of fun!” Izuku grinned. “He has a copy quirk. I think he can copy up to three people’s quirks at the same time? There’s really no way to know who’s quirks he’s copied until you fight him though.”

“Perfect!” Mei’s eyes narrowed in on Monoma from across the crowd. “He’ll be the perfect demonstration of how adaptable my babies are!!!”

“I don’t know whether to pity him or just laugh.” Hitoshi said, amused. “Oof, Uraraka’s strong, right?”

“Yeah, she really is!” Izuku answered. “Why?”

“Because you better hope she wins her fight.” Hitoshi pointed at the brackets. “Otherwise you’re going to be up against Bakugo in the next round.”

Izuku gulped and glanced over to where Katsuki was surrounded by his team from the cavalry battle. Kirishima was patting him on the back, but Izuku could feel his anger from all the way across the field. Katsuki had always been the best, ever since Izuku could remember, so it must be eating at him that he hadn’t gotten first in either of the first two rounds and it must hurt even worse that he was beaten by *Izuku* of all people. He wanted to feel guilty about that. Years of standing in Katsuki’s shadow had primed him to believe that if he wasn’t helping his best friend, being a stepping stone on his way to greatness, then he was nothing. If he wasn’t helping Katsuki be the best, then he really was the useless deku that everyone told him that he was.

But things had changed since middle school. For one, Izuku had found a new dream that didn’t have anything to do with Katsuki and for another he knew what *real* friendship was like now. Friendship was comparing notebooks to figure out why Mei’s latest experiment kept exploding. It was ganging up on Hitoshi to make him laugh when he hadn’t gotten enough sleep the night before. It was curling up under a fluffy blanket after a villain attack.

It was winning the first two rounds of the sports festival when he didn’t have to, just to make sure his friend made it to the third round.

“Don’t worry.” Izuku assured his friends. “Katsuki may be strong, but we’re not friends anymore. He’s lost the right to hurt me.”

“So…uh…did you ever figure out how that gen-ed’s kid quirk worked?” Ojiro asked Tokoyami. “You might have to fight him again, you know.”

“I am aware.” Tokoyami answered. “But first I will have to beat a fellow agent of darkness.”

“…ok?” Ojiro looked at him strangely, but Tokoyami was more focused on his next fight and on ignoring Todoroki, who was brooding in one of the upper rows of their section of the stands. If he was being completely honest, he hadn’t expected his team’s last minute strategy to come to anything. He and his teammates had been fully prepared to embrace the dark void of empty failure when the buzzer rang, but somehow they had managed to pull through. Tokoyami couldn’t stop wondering, however, why Todoroki had refused to use his fire. It had been obvious in that moment that Dark Shadow was weak to his left side and yet Todoroki had *let* him win. There must be some dark reason for his refusal, but Tokoyami wasn’t one to reveal others’ inner darknesses to the world.

But perhaps revealing it to a certain analyst who seemed determined to help their class wouldn’t be the end of the world. Perhaps he should talk to Aizawa about peering through the shadows to implore the assistance of the mysterious Cheat Code?

“It is of no importance.” Tokoyami said finally. “Dark Shadow and I will be victorious.”

“I just hope the purple kid doesn’t start singing again.” Dark Shadow shuddered. “I think that was creepier than being brainwashed.”

“Singing?” Aoyama looked at them curiously. “Why would the monsieur sing in the middle of a fight? He doesn’t seem *nearly* gorgeous enough to pull it off!”

“I think it had something to do with his quirk activation.” Kamakiri leaned over the wall dividing 1A and 1B. “Sorry to eavesdrop, but it’s a tournament, so I might have to fight him again too. It was only after he started singing that he took control of us.”

“But he didn’t sing to me!” Dark Shadow complained.

“You *did* hear him sing, though.” Tokoyami said. “Perhaps the best strategy would be to cover one’s ears to prevent themselves from being pulled under by the siren’s song.”

“What the heck are you guys talking about?” Mineta yelled. He had an ugly purple black eye that Recover Girl had apparently refused to heal. “That purple guy doesn’t sing! And covering your ears won’t do shit! He takes control of you though punching you!”

“He only punched you because you were being rude, Mineta.” Tsu pointed out bluntly. “He takes control of you through physical contact. He never made contact with me, so my head was clear the whole time, but I’m pretty sure he touched Shoji when he was going after you.”

Everyone turned to look at Shoji, who gave a dignified nod. Tokoyami was starting to get more confused the more people spoke up, “But…I never touched him, at least not before he and his agents of chaos possessed my team.”

“You’re all idiots.” Monoma said. “It’s obviously eye contact.”

“You didn’t even fight him, Monoma, so pipe down!” Kendo slapped him over the head and shrunk her hand as she appeared over the wall.

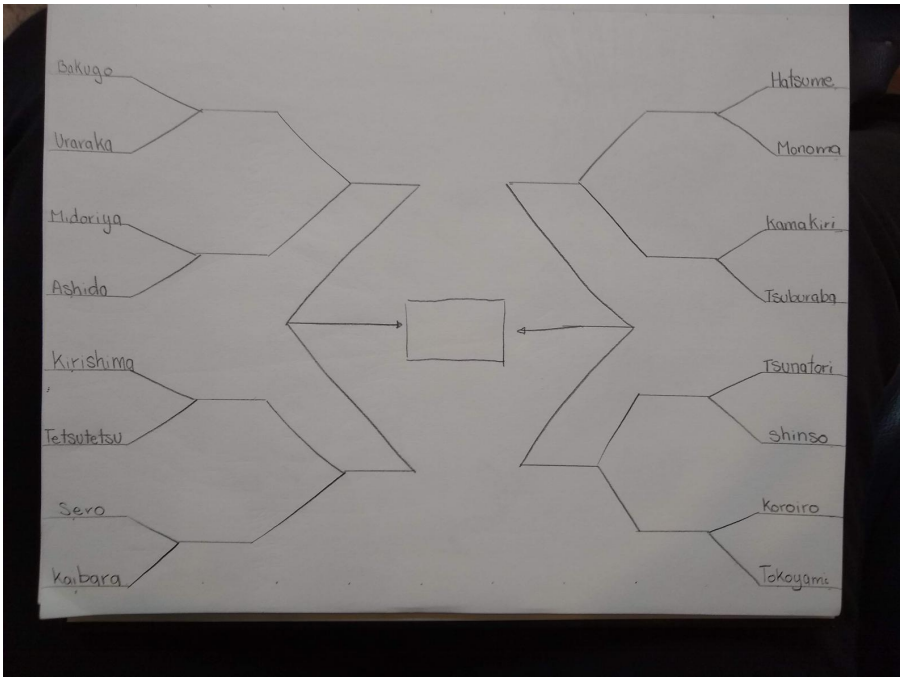
“I think he’s got kinda a sphinx quirk or something.” She suggested. “He got us by giving us riddles. When we couldn’t figure out the answer quickly enough, he took control.”

“I hope it is not that.” Pony jumped up and landed on the wall. “I have difficulty with riddles in my first language, I won’t have no hope in my second!”

“Is his quirk truly that difficult to parse out?” Yaoyorozu piped up. Most of the class had joined the conversation by this point, understandably. “Surely the activation requirements must be obvious by now if he’s fought so many of you.”

Tokoyami sighed. “He is a mystery wrapped within an enigma.”

“He’s a weirdo, that’s what he is.” Dark Shadow grumbled. “Come on Fumikage, I want french fries.”



Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X

Round One

Chapter Summary

The first round of the tournament.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Steppy
Mama Oruga
a stray knife
ZeroRanger423

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Ochako forcefully reminded herself that she had nothing to be scared of as she waited for the match to start. If a group of students that weren't in the hero course could strand up against Bakugo and even call him *Kacchan* just because they thought it was funny, then she, a future hero, had no reason to be terrified of him. Now if only her heartbeat would get the memo.

Midoriya had offered to help her come up with a strategy to use against him, but Ochako already had the beginnings of a plan in her mind and she didn't want to only rely on the support course to get her though. If she succeeded here, then she'd know she was strong enough on her own merit and if she didn't then she'd know she still needed to improve.

The second that Midnight started the match, Ochako rushed forward, only to be brutally blown back. She kept going. It could have just been her imagination, but it felt like Bakugo was going even harder against her than he normally would. A couple of times, she even heard him mutter something about *Deku* as he forced her back, so she figured he was probably taking out his frustrations with Midoriya out on her. It wasn't fair, obviously, but this was *Bakugo* they were talking about, the guy who called pretty much everyone *extras,* so she didn't really have high expectations when it came to kindness or empathy.

Hopefully, however, she could use his anger to her advantage. When

people were angry, they got hyper focused and missed things. She used the smokescreen Bakugo was creating to float as many small rocks as she could, only slowing down and stopping when she felt like there was no way he could avoid her meteor shower.

“What? Finally giving up?” Bakugo scoffed. “I should have expected that from anyone willing to partner up with *Deku.* ”

“I think you still have a lot to learn about not underestimating people.” Ochako panted. She was close to her limit now, but it had to be enough. She’d *make* it be enough. “Thank you.”

Bakugo’s eyes narrowed, “What the fuck for?”

Ochako smiled and brought her hands together, “For keeping your eyes on me.”

She lunged forward, ignoring the sting as some of the small pebbles hit her on their way down. Bakguo’s eyes widened and she saw a tiny glimmer of fear. She could do this! She reached out toward him. *Just a little farther!!!*

Bakugo’s entire body tensed in determination and suddenly there was a loud boom as the loudest boom Ochako had ever heard rocked the stadium. It was enough to knock her completely off her feet and disintegrate her epic meteor shower to nothing but useless dust and pebbles. Tears prickled at the corner of her eyes as she struggled to stand, but Bakugo was right there, forcing her to the ground again with another explosion, “What was that Round Face, huh? Did *Deku* give you that strategy?”

“No, that was all me.” Ochako smiled and pushed past her nausea as she finally managed to touch Bakugo. He tensed as his gravity was removed, but the effects lasted less than a second before Ochako started throwing up and dropped him. So much for that plan.

“Come on, Round Face! Fight Me!”

Bakugo’s voice seemed muffled as she tried to force herself to her feet, but she was already beyond her limits and ended up collapsing on the floor.

“Uraraka is unable to continue!” Midnight announced. “Bakugo wins!”

Izuku swallowed nervously and ran though everything he knew about

Mina Ashido, watching carefully as she stretched, limbering herself up for their match. She was kind, from what he'd seen, and had decent quirk control, but nothing too special. She could control both the acidity and the viscosity of her acids, which made her dangerous, but she didn't really have any ranged attacks from what he'd seen.

Then again, neither did he.

Unlike the first round, there wasn't really a convenient robot for him to hack. He *could* take control of the security systems, maybe, but that would be risky because that would take time and would leave him open to attack. His best bet for now was to keep her at a distance and then figure out something out as he went along. That was all assuming he even wanted to win this round to begin with, which he still hadn't decided.

"Begin!"

Ashindo immediately started skating toward him on her acid, "Honestly, I feel kinda bad for beating you. Bakubro said you were quirkless, so this is kinda a bad match-up for you, huh?"

Izuku couldn't help feeling annoyed as he ran away, "Every match-up's a bad match-up for me. That doesn't mean I should just give up."

"Oh yeah, more power to ya!" Ashido laughed. "But you're still gonna lose!"

It was weird because it felt like she should be making fun of him, but for some reason, Izuku felt like she just hadn't clued in that what she said might be rude, so he'd forgive her this time...but he also kinda wanted to prove her wrong. Actually, he wanted to prove a lot of people wrong. He wanted to prove, live on national television, that quirkless didn't mean useless and he wouldn't even need to rely on his tech to do it, just Ashido's quirk and *maybe* a loophole or two.

Izuku grinned and kept running around the stage, zigzagging around the small space and keeping just barely out of reach of Ashido. The crowd seemed to be getting bored with their game of cat and mouse, but it wouldn't last too much longer. Izuku was already having to jump half the time just to avoid the acid trails that Ashido was leaving everywhere as she ran. He waited until about 80% of the stage was completely coated in acid before taking off his uniform jacket and running toward the corner of the stage.

There was a small torch in each corner. They were mostly for

decoration and Izuku honestly wasn't completely sure that they didn't count as *out of bounds* but he didn't technically have to cross the lines to reach them, so he was willing to risk it. He crumpled his shirt into a ball and shoved it into the flames until it caught, then ignored the gasps and screams of the crowd as he threw the now burning shirt onto the ground, smirking at Ashido as the acid on the ground caught fire and the flames started racing toward her.

Her eyes widened and she immediately jumped off of her acid trail, but there were only so many places she could go. Unlike Izuku, she hadn't been paying attention to what areas on the field were free of acid, so while she was busy trying to find a safe place to put her feet, he was able to pick his way around the flames and give her one final push over the line.

"Ashido Mina is out of bounds!" Midnight yelled. "Izuku Midoriya wins! Now both of you get off the field before you get hurt!"

"Did...did they seriously just knock eachother out?" Mic asked. "Well, I guess that's what you get when you're evenly matched, huh? Kirishima vs. Tetsutetsu will be decided via a tiebreaker once they finally wake up!"

Sero cracked his neck and grinned as Midnight announced the beginning of the match, "This is kinda a bad match-up for you, huh? I mean, it could be worse, like can you imagine if Todoroki had made it to this round? But, uh, still, you ever tried to vacuum up a piece of string? This is gonna be kinda like that…"

Kaibara shrugged and started rotating his fingers experimentally, "I guess you might be right, but what kind of hero would I be if I let a little thing like a bad quirk match-up keep me from fighting."

Sero shook his head and shot tape from both of his elbows. As he expected, the tape immediately started wrapping around his arms. It wouldn't be long before he wouldn't be able to rotate at all and Sero would win!

To his surprise, however, Kaibara suddenly started rotating faster than he was producing tape. Before Sero could speed up to compensate or cut off his tape, Kaibara had used his tape to pull them together and Sero's eyes widened as Kaibara's head started to spin. One devastating headbutt later, Kaibara was grimacing as he tried to free his arms from the tape.

“Sero is KO’ed. Kaibara wins!”

“Are you *sure* you don’t want to use any of my babies?” Hatsume asked innocently. “Just to level the playing field, you know!”

Monoma scoffed, “Are you implying that I can’t beat you on my own merit? Class 1B is superior, we don’t need to rely on charity from other courses to prove our abilities, unlike *some classes.* Are you forgetting that it was *my* team that came in first during the cavalry battle? At least I didn’t provide opportunities for those class 1A bastards to steal our points!”

“We just wanted everything to be fair!” Mei jumped up and down in excitement as she made a final mental inventory of her babies. “Taking away that many points and not giving anyone a chance to recover would have just been rude!”

“The best don’t have the time to worry about the opinions of others.” Monoma rolled his eyes. “You may as well give up now. Your *babies* aren’t going to stand a chance against three quirks.”

“Hmm…” Mei pretended to think about it for a moment. “Nah, I still haven’t gotten what I came for!”

“And what is that?” Monoma sneered.

Mei grinned manically as Midnight told them to start, “The spotlight!”

Monoma huffed haughtily, rapidly growing his hand ten times its size and reaching toward her, “The spotlight goes to those that deserve it.”

Mei tapped the mic that Izu-kun had programmed for her and smiled when she heard the sound echo through the stadium speakers, “Hello, ladies and gentlemen! I’m Mei Hatsume, the future CEO of Hatsume Industries and I’d like to introduce you to my babies!”

“What?!?!” Mic’s voice echoed over the speakers as well. “How is she doing that?!”

“My best guess is that Midoriya helped her hack into our speaker system.” Aizawa sounded amused. “Problem children.”

“This first invention is one of my personal favorites!” Mei announced eyes zooming in on the booth where the support companies were watching with interest. “It’s a multi-purpose capture net that can take

care of even the most troublesome quirks!”

She shot the net toward Monoma, who might have been able to dodge if the extra weight from his larger hands hadn’t thrown him off. He growled as the net wrapped around him, but his eyes shone with anger and determination as his hands shrunk and vines started growing from his head and reaching between the holes in the net.

“Ah! As my lovely assistant is demonstrating, nets aren’t the best fit for every quirk heroes encounter. That’s why each of my capture nets is controlled by magnets!” She pressed a button and the net fell apart. “One button control for easy capture and release!”

“I’m not your assistant!” Monoma’s face turned bright red and he untangled his vines from the remainder of her net and shot them toward her. “Stop toying with me!”

Mei simply kept smiling and pressed another button. Legs shot out of her backpack and effortless helped her dodge, “My universal tripod senses and responds to threats in the environment and the multi directional control means that this nifty invention will help you dodge and weave no matter where your opponents attacks are coming from!”

“Stop monologuing and fight me already!” Monoma yelled. “Do you think support is better than 1B?! Is that it?!”

“Sometimes, however, you need a little more firepower!” Mei ignored Monoma’s protests as she grabbed another invention from her belt. “And what’s better for firepower than a flamethrower? Perfect for combating plant-based quirks or really any quirk that might be flammable!”

Monoma panicked as the vines caught fire, but he detached them quickly enough that the flames didn’t manage to burn him. Mei was both curious and excited as she wondered what quirk he’d use next, since Izu-kun had said he could copy three. He’d also said that his quirk would limit the fight to about five minutes, since after that he’d basically be fighting quirkless and it wouldn’t be nearly as entertaining, so she had to be efficient and show all the inventions she wanted to before his quirk ran out. Mei glanced up at the support booth again and smiled in triumph. They were eating this up.

“Fine! You wanna play dirty?” Monoma scowled at her. “Let’s see how you handle this!”

The ground beneath her turned to mush, but Mei simply activated her

hover boots and her jetpack, “I recommend using these two inventions in tandem, but they’re both amazing on their own as well! When it’s too dangerous to be on the ground, why limit yourself to obeying gravity?”

Monoma ground his teeth together and reactivated the quirk that made his hands larger as he attempted to swat her out of the air. She responded by shooting him with a portable taser.

The fight went on like that for a few minutes and Mei was careful to respond to each new threat with a different baby so that the support companies would be able to see the full variety of her arsenal. Monoma kept getting more and more angry until he stopped being able to call on the quirks he’d copied and his shoulders slumped. Mei finished off showing one more invention, then bowed.

“Thank you everyone! Just a reminder that it’s Mei Hatsume, future CEO of Hatsume Industries!” She dusted off her hands and stepped over the line with a sigh. “Pleasure doing business with you!”

Midnight sounded like she was holding back laughter as she announced the match, “Hatsume is out of bounds. Monoma wins!”

Kamakiri started shooting his blades at Tsuburaba as soon as the match began, but, as predicted, his blades simply buried themselves harmlessly in an invisible shield of hardened air. He didn’t let that intimidate him, however, and kept throwing his blades. The thing about Tsuburaba’s air constructs was that they were fragile. Enough good hits and they were liable to shatter. He kept up his assault, but Tsuburaba didn’t make it easy with how he kept moving around the stage to avoid his knives.

Kamakiri rolled his eyes as Tsuburaba made his way to his other side, visibly out of breath, “Are you done already? I was looking forward to a fight!”

Tsuburaba simply smiled and took a deep breath. It was difficult to *see* Tsuburaba’s constructs, so when Kamakiri thought it was safest to dodge when it looked like his opponent was throwing something. He felt something similar to a spear fly past him, but that wasn’t the biggest surprise. No, the surprise was the *wall* he ran into.

“You…” Kamakiri sent a few blades out from his body in every direction and for the first time, realized that Tsuburaba hadn’t been moving around to dodge, but instead to create a maze of invisible

walls that were now blocking him in on three sides. The only exit he had was straight over the line and Tsuburaba was running toward him, holding a shield of air in front of him that already had several blades buried in it.

Kamakiri tried to hold his ground, he really did, but it only took a few instinctual steps backward for him to officially lose the match.

“Kamakiri is out of bounds!” Midnight yelled. “Tsuburaba wins!”

Pony was *really* hoping that Shinso’s quirk wasn’t riddles.

She knew it was some kind of brainwashing, since she’d obviously spend a good portion of the second round under his control, but she had no idea how to protect herself, so the best thing to do would be to end the match before he had a chance to use it!

That was why, as soon as Midnight gave the signal to begin, Pony immediately began shooting her horns at him. He dodged most of them deftly, only getting a few grazes, but he just kept *staring* at her.

Present Mic’s voice echoed over the field and Pony made a note to tell Vlad-Sensei that they might need a new speaker system, since the audio quality was super weird, “ *For those of you who don’t know, Pony is an exchange student from…where was it again? Australia?”*

“America!” Pony yelled. How did her english teacher not remember where she was from?! They’d talked about her hometown!

From across the field, Shinso smirked, still maintaining eye contact, “I win.”

Pony felt her body relax with a jolt as Shinso took control. Oh no! It must have been eye contact! That was why he hadn’t stopped staring at her!

“Turn around and walk out of bounds like a good little hero.” Shinso ordered and Pony didn’t have any choice but to obey.

“Well that was weird!” Present Mic spoke up again, but the audio quality was better. “She’s just obeying him!!!”

“Pony is out of bounds! Shinso wins!”

“It is a pleasure to fight another servant of darkness.” Tokoyami said

seriously.

“Of course.” Kuroiro responded. “It is an honor.”

“Oh come on! Stop being edgelords and let’s just fight already!!!” Dark Shadow complained, lunging forward and swiping at Kuroiro. The moment he did, however, their opponent completely disappeared.

“What?!” Dark Shadow yelled. “Where’d he go?!”

Tokoyami’s eyes widened and he reared back as Kuroiro emerged from *his chest* right where he joined with Dark Shadow, “Boo.”

Tokoyami stumbled back, but managed to get a hold on Kuroiro’s arm and shove him away, “How…?”

Kuroiro smirked and ran toward Dark Shadow again. Just like before, he disappeared as soon as they made contact, but this time, Dark Shadow stifferened and started moving somewhat jerkily.

“Fumikage…” Dark Shadow made a clumsy swipe at him and Tokoyami felt a strike of fear. “I’m not doing this!”

Tokoyami’s mind raced. What did he know? He knew that somehow, Kuroiro was able to disappear when he made contact with Dark Shadow, it was almost as if they were melding together, and he seemed to be trying to control him, which was bad. So, how could he counteract that?

“Dark Shadow!” Tokoyami yelled. “Return to me!”

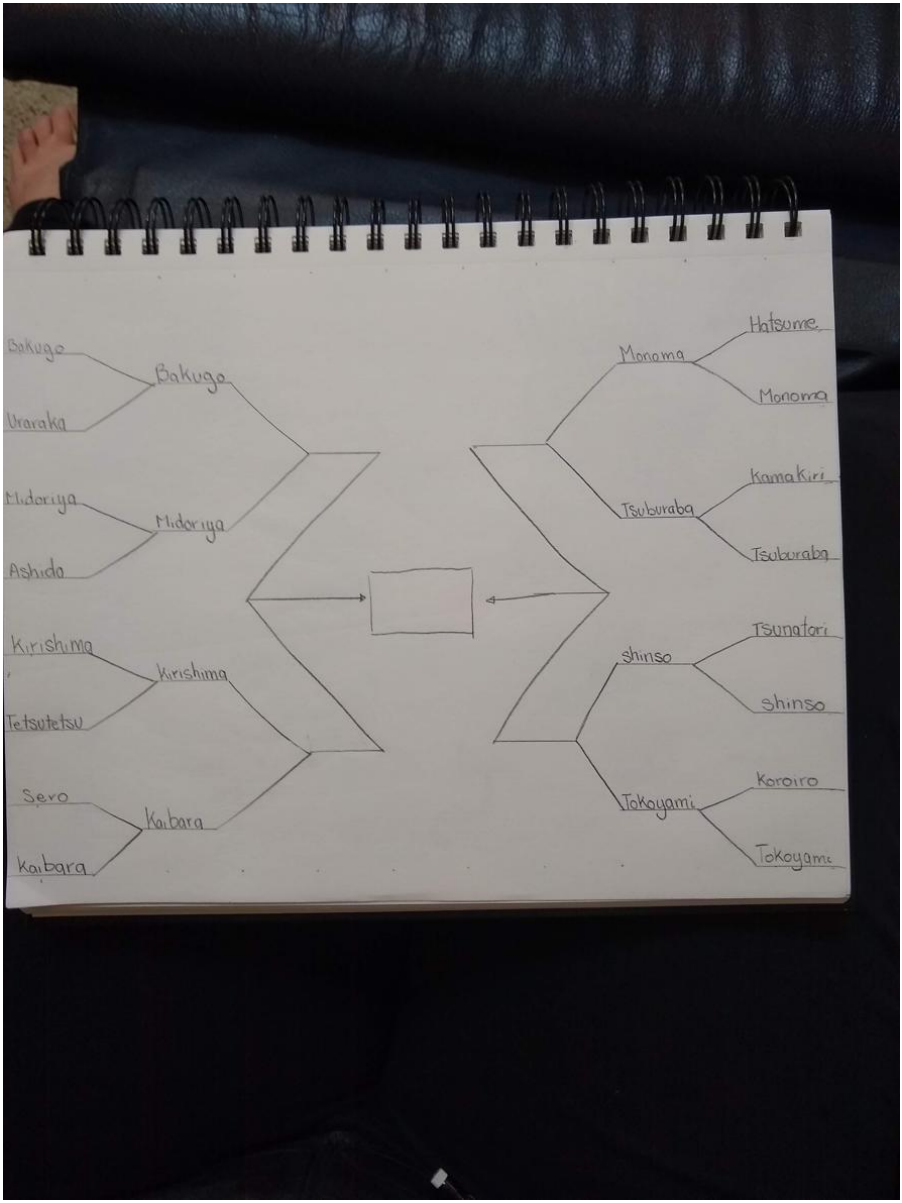
Thankfully, Dark Shadow still had enough control of his actions to obey the order and within moments he had gratefully disappeared back inside Tokoyami’s chest. As soon as Dark Shadow disappeared, Kuroiro became visible again right in front of Tokoyami.

“I guess I need a little more practice before I can really control dark objects, huh?” Kuroiro looked exhausted. “Oh well.”

Tokoyami didn’t want to have to do this without Dark Shadow, but he would do what it took to win and to protect his quirk. Taking advantage of Kuroiro’s exhaustion, Tokoyami tackled him to the ground and pinned him. He struggled for a few moments, but then Dark Shadow emerged and braced Tokoyami so that he had extra strength, all while being careful not to touch Kuroiro. After a few seconds, it became apparent that he wasn’t getting out of this and

Kuroiro stopped struggling.

“Kuroiro is unable to move! Tokoyami wins!”



Limits

Chapter Summary

The second round of the one on ones

Chapter Notes

Art!
Blue Sky
PaOPaO X
PeachyPie
Loretta_HK1120
Coppery Copper
SalmonMeister

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Also, I didn't bother writing the arm wresting match between Kirishima and Tetstutetsu because it's the same as canon.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku should be scared.

He was about to face the kid who had made his life miserable for ten years, the one who had given him more scars than anyone else, the one who told him to take a swan dive off the roof, and, of course, the one who as chomping at the bit to teach him a lesson. He should be absolutely terrified, but instead he was just angry.

Across from him, Katsuki was already popping tiny explosions in his hands threateningly. He looked absolutely pissed, but then again, Izuku had been doing things all day that he knew would set him off, so he supposed on some level he'd known this would happen, even if he didn't deserve it. No one deserved to have their dreams trampled on and told they were less than a pebble on the side of the road just because of the way they were born.

So what? Izuku had found friends and done well in the other rounds, but that had very little if nothing to do with his former bully, so Katsuki had no right to be angry. He'd won the first round by accident, and the second for Shinso, and even if annoying Katsuki had been a nice side effect, that wasn't why he wanted to do his best.

No, Izuku was doing this for himself.

He didn't allow himself to collapse in on himself like he would have back in middle school. As he waited for Midnight to begin the match, Izuku held his head high and threw his shoulders back, which seemed to annoy Katsuki even more. He probably wanted things to go back to the way they were, the *good old days* when he'd been the top of the food chain and Izuku had been nothing, and it was pissing him off that those days were over. Izuku had friends now. He had a new dream that he loved and that had nothing to do with Katsuki and he wouldn't give that up for the world.

"I'm gonna kill you, Deku!" Katsuki growled, quiet enough that it was almost completely drowned out by the roar of the crowd. "I'm gonna explode your quirkless ass so hard they'll have to send your ashes home to Auntie Inko in a takeout box!"

Izuku's glare hardened, but otherwise he didn't change his expression. Katsuki continued spitting insults as they waited for the fight to begin, but Izuku just let them wash over him, far too familiar with Katsuki's particular brand of verbal violence to be bothered when he knew that Mei was waiting with the rest of their class to see him after the fight. Maybe Katsuki should research trash talking to make his words a more effective weapon against villains, because they weren't going to work on Izuku anymore.

"Alright! I want a good clean match!" Midnight announced to the crowd. "Same rules as the last round apply! You win by forcing your opponent to leave the ring, knocking them out, or making them surrender to your will! Whoever wins these matches moves on to the semi finals! Begin!"

As soon as she cracked her whip, Katsuki immediately launched himself forward, using his explosions to propel himself as he anticipated the beatdown to come, "Die, Deku!!!"

The rules dictated that opponents must stay on their side of the stage before the match, but there was no rule on exactly *where.* Most students chose to wait in the middle of their space, giving themselves good options for both evasion and attack. It was a good strategy, but Katsuki was so concerned with beating him that he'd failed to notice exactly how close to the line Izuku was standing until he took a single step backwards over the line, maintaining eye contact the whole time.

It had never occurred to him that Izuku would rather forfeit the match

than fight him.

The entire stadium fell silent as everyone processed what Izuku had just done. Even Katsuki's explosions stuttered to a stop halfway across the stage and he landed roughly as he stared at Izuku in confused disbelief. It was like someone had taken a snapshot of that moment and engraved it into glass to preserve it forever.

Then that moment shattered.

"No!" Katsuki immediately launched himself forward again. "No! You don't get to give up, Deku! You've been looking down on me all day, goddammit! Fight me!"

Izuku felt a small strike of fear. Were the teachers actually going to stop him? Or were they going to be just like the ones in middle school and turn a blind eye to their golden boy breaking the rules? Would they let Katsuki beat him up and then pull some bullshit reason out of their asses about how it hadn't been clear that Izuku had crossed the line or how it somehow didn't count, ultimately blaming him for Katsuki's temper being out of control? Either way, Izuku refused to move. It wasn't his responsibility to run away in fear.

The moment of truth came right as Katsuki was about to let loose an explosion to Izuku's face, but was met with a cement wall that suddenly sprang out of the ground instead. The explosion left a sizable dent in the wall and sent cement chunks flying everywhere, but Izuku only flinched slightly as he got hit with a few pebbles.

"Stand down, Bakugo." Cementoss growled. "The match is already over. Midoriya is over the line and you're moving on."

"No!" Bakugo growled and hit the wall with another explosion. "That's not a win, that's a gimme! You've been pissing me off all day, Deku, just shut up and fight me already! You owe me a fight, you quirkless piece of shit!"

The wall was practically destroyed at this point, but Katsuki's explosions were getting weaker as Midnight came up behind him and he started breathing in her quirk, "Fight me...Deku! You...owe...me...a fight…"

Izuku simply continued staring him down, an odd sense of power flooding through him as he said something that deep down, he'd always wanted to say, "No, Kacchan. Actually, I don't owe you anything."

Kirishima was kinda torn. On the one hand, it was kinda unmanly for that support student to just step out of the ring like that, but on the other it was *super* unmanly for Bakugo to keep going after him after the match was over. Honestly, Bakugo should have been prepared for that, considering that the other support student did basically the same thing, even if she'd played with Monoma for a while before surrendering, which would hopefully make him a little less smug and annoying next time the two classes had to work together, but still, the support course students didn't really have any motivation to win the sports festival, so it made sense to lose early on.

He shook his head and walked out of the tunnel for his own match. He couldn't afford to be thinking about Baku-bro when he had his own match to worry about. With the match-ups the way they were right now, if he won this match, he'd be fighting Bakugo in the next round and he could give him the fight he deserved. It probably wasn't what he wanted, but it would help to take his frustrations out on someone with thick skin.

But to help his friend, he needed to get to beat this drill guy from 1B. Sero would have been easier, since Kirishima would have been able to harden his skin and cut through the tape without much of an issue, but Kaibara had shown in the last match that he had a good head on his shoulders and was willing to fight creatively, even in the case of a bad quirk match-up, so Kirishima had to be on his guard. He could do this!

"Begin!"

Kaibara's fingers spun so fast that Kirishima could hardly even see him as they ran at each other. Kirishima dodged the attacks he could and paid close attention to Kaibara's movements to try and predict where the rest of his attacks would land and only hardened those parts of his body. This was going to be primarily a battle of stamina. If he could keep up his hardening longer than Kaibara could gyrate, then he'd win, but if he softened before his opponent got tired, he'd lose. It was simple, straight forward, and manly, just like he liked.

Kirishima stayed on the defensive as long as he could. Hardening his whole body was exhausting, but hardening small sections of his skin like this was almost instinctual at this point and was something he could do for hours before he had to stop. Kaibara, however, caught onto his strategy within a few minutes of starting the match. His stance changed and he started moving faster and launching multiple

attacks at once, which made it a lot harder for Kirishima to predict where he needed to harden. Sometimes, he'd be all prepared for a hand to his ribs, only to be surprised by a foot trying to drill into one of his shins and had to harden as quickly as he could, just to keep from losing.

As soon as his opponent showed the slightest signs that he was getting tired, Krishima took his chance. Hardening his whole body, he lunged forward and grabbed his arms, wincing at the way Kaibara's limbs twisted beneath his hands as he tried to escape. Kirishima just dragged him toward the edge, tugging hard and relying on his slightly greater physical strength to pull Kaibara from where he was trying to anchor himself into the ground. The skin on his palms had been ground down to almost nothing by the time he finally managed to throw Kaibara from the ring with a roar.

"And with that spectacular move, Kaibara is out of bounds!" Midnight yelled. "Kirishima advances to the semi-finals!"

"It truly doesn't matter which of us wins this match." Monoma said. "Either way, we've shown that 1B is just as good as 1A in every aspect!"

Tsuburaba shook his head in amusement, "I really don't think that they're as high and mighty as you think they are, Monoma. Sure, they fought some villains, but we all took the same test, didn't we? We're all in the hero course, which is more than I can say for your last opponent."

Monoma's expression soured, "I was being chivalrous and that support witch took advantage of that. If I ever fight her again, I'll show her the true power of our class!"

Tsuburaba rolled his eyes, "Yeah, sure. More like she'll wipe the floor with you with even better gear. Seriously, dude, it's like she wasn't even trying."

"Just shut up." Monoma grit his teeth. "If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were starting to actually *believe* that 1B is inferior."

"Again, dude, that's literally just you." Tsuburaba muttered. "But whatever, let's fight."

Midnight gave the signal and Monoma immediately started letting out mushroom spores. He had planned on pulling that move out later in

the fight, but he wanted to prove Tsuburaba and everyone else who ever talked about his stupid *inferiority complex* wrong. He wasn't inferior! He could end this fight before it even began!

Tsuburaba took a deep breath to start using his quirk, but before he was able to make any constructs, he got a lungful of the invisible spores and started coughing. That would show him! Monoma ran over to him and Tsuburaba tried to fight him off, but it was difficult to defend against a physical assault when it felt like his lungs were going to explode and all Monoma needed was one good touch.

He copied Tsuburaba's quirk and turned his head to the side he'd kept free of the spores so that he could take a deep breath. He made a sort of table floating a few feet above the ground and pushed Tsuburaba onto it, then welded him in place and took a few steps back.

"Tsuburaba, can you move?" Midnight asked.

Tsuburaba tried to wriggle around a little bit, but Monoma had taken care to anchor him well so that there was no way he could break out. Monoma smiled as he shook his head.

"Tsuburaba is immobilized! Monoma advances!"

"Are you sure you can do this?" Izuku asked. "I mean, of course you can, obviously, but it's just that Tokoyami is really strong and he already knows your quirk! Plus you have to brainwash him and dark shadow separately, so it's more like you're fighting two opponents instead of one. It's kinda unfair."

"Oh, come on! Have a little faith in our baby." Mei hit Izuku softly over the head and turned to Hitoshi. "But seriously, rely on the baby I made you and Izu-kun's analysis and you'll be fine. You've made it this far and bird-boy doesn't know how your quirk works, right?"

"Not that I know of." Hitoshi shrugged, burying his nervousness deep underneath his normal layer of apathy. "He's got a strong quirk…"

"But Mei-chan is right." Izuku smiled brightly. "You're stronger!"

Mei gave a manic grin and slapped him on the back, "Knock 'em dead!"

Hitoshi rolled his eyes, but still felt a little better as he made his way out of the tunnels and onto the field. Beating Pony was one thing. She

didn't have an excellent grasp on the language, so it was easy to trick her into responding without her catching onto the fact that his quirk was verbal. He didn't think the same trick would work with Tokoyami, however. His support item *could* imitate voices, like he'd done with Present Mic, but with two sets of ears to hear the irregularities, it was twice as likely that Tokoyami and Dark Shadow would figure out the ruse and from there it wouldn't take much of a leap to figure out that it had something to do with his voice and then answering questions, so imitating someone else's voice was too risky.

Hitoshi ran through the fake requirements he'd used already. He'd done singing, touch, eye contact...he should try to switch it up, maybe. It would be difficult to get both of them to respond, but if the cavalry battle had proved anything, it was that if he had to choose between the two, Dark Shadow was the only option. It was too dangerous to take control of Tokoyami without taking control of his quirk and Shinso didn't know how to use their link to take control of both of them...yet.

He shoved his hands in his pockets, appearing carefully bored as he waited for the match to begin. Tokoyami was alone for the time being, or, well, as alone as Hitoshi thought he ever was, but Dark Shadow wasn't visible yet, which would make it way more difficult to take control of him. Hopefully the quirk would come out and start talking shortly after the start of the match, because if not…

Hitoshi took a deep breath and forced himself to relax. He'd be fine. If worse came to worst, he still had his support item and some physical training to rely on, right? Izuku and Mei had worked really hard to make sure he made it this far, so he wouldn't' disappoint his kidnappers by losing this early in the tournament. He had to get into the hero course and live up to his name of Extra-Credit-Kun.

"Are you boys ready?" Midnight asked, cracking her whip. "Begin!"

"So Hot Topic," Hitoshi started, "where's your better half?"

Tokoyami's eyes narrowed as he responded carefully, "We do not know what methods of darkness you employed to take control of us in the cavalry battle. It is better for Dark Shadow to conserve his strength for our moment of need."

Hitoshi let out a controlled breath of relief. One down, but he wasn't out of the woods yet, considering that Tokoyami had all but told him that the two were waiting for him to take control of the host and let

the quirk save him. He let the connection he'd formed hang for the moment and thought. Tokoyami was treating him cautiously because of the unknown factors to do with his quirk and it didn't look like Dark Shadow was going to be coming out anytime soon, not unless he brainwashed Tokoyami and opened himself up to attack. If only there was a way he could use his link to Tokoyami to take control of Dark Shadow!!!

His face scrunched up in frustration and he could hear the confused and annoyed mummerings that were starting to come from the audience as two powerful students just stood still when they should be putting on a show. Even if HItoshi *did* end up brainwashing Tokoyami and risking Dark Shadow's wrath, he needed to do *something* , if only to disguise his quirk. The good thing was that whatever he did could be completely random.

Hitoshi laid down on the rough concrete, covering his face with his arm.

His lips twitched as the annoyed whispers turned to pure bafflement and Midnight sounded very confused as she questioned what to do next, "Shinso, what's going on? Are you surrendering?"

"Well, he hasn't attacked me yet." Hitoshi drawled. "So no, I'm not surrendering. I just figured I may as well be productive and take a nap. Now be quiet, I'm trying to sleep."

He could practically feel Tokoyami's confusion, "But why?"

Hitoshi gave an awkward half-shrug from his place on the floor, "Insomnia's a bitch."

He could hear the snicker in Present Mic's voice as he tried to commentate, "Well, folks, there you have it! Hitoshi Shinso from general education has decided to take a nap instead of fight! In all my years of announcing the sports festival, I honestly don't think I've ever seen anything like this! What do you think, Eraser?"

"I think he's leaving himself open to attack." Eraser said bluntly. "With the way he's covering his eyes, he might sleep better, but he won't be able to see it coming when and if Tokoyami decides to end the fight."

"Who knows, Eraser," Present Mic said cheerfully, "maybe the kid's got a plan."

Eraser scoffed, “If he does, it’s probably not a very good one.”

Ouch, but true. Hitoshi really didn’t know what he was supposed to do. He might be able to take Tokoyami in a physical fight, but even with his support item, he didn’t stand a chance against Dark Shadow. He sighed and tried to block out as much of the surrounding noise as he could so he could focus on the link his quirk had created with Tokoyami. Izuku said that his quirk put his victim’s body under his brain’s control, right? They were going to experiment more with partial control after he got into the hero course, but maybe the extra adrenaline of a stressful fight would give him some sort of edge and make him have a breakthrough?

He took a deep breath and let it out, reaching out along the link until he felt what he assumed was Tokoyami. He really needed to pay more attention to what people’s consciousnesses felt like, didn’t he. He carefully poked and prodded, but kept half an ear on the real world, knowing it was only a matter of time before Tokoyami took his teacher’s advice to heart and just attacked Hitoshi no matter how strange and unpredictably he was acting.

He’d thought that he could almost feel Tokoyami’s confusion earlier, but the more he explored their link, the more he realized that he wasn’t just imagining it. He really *could* feel his confusion as it filtered across the link, but he could feel other emotions as well. Frustration, fear, hesitence, and...Hitoshi inhaled sharply. That wasn’t Tokoyami.

What he felt was similar, of course, but it was like a different flavor of the same candy. Same base, but at the same time, Dark Shadow was completely unique. There was a slight barrier preventing him from reaching the quirk, but it felt more like the push that kept him from keeping his quirk active without taking control of someone, and Hitoshi knew he could push through that. He smiled.

“Oh, this is stupid!” Dark Shadow finally started talking. “Come on Fumikage! He’s just laying there! Let’s beat him!”

Tokoyami didn’t respond, but based on his footsteps, he did start running. Hitoshi took another deep breath and pushed the link as far as it would go. He was starting to get a headache and he was definitely out of breath, but he could feel the link expanding to include *everyone* in his opponent’s brain.

The footsteps got closer and there was a whoosh of air as Tokoyami made his move, but that was just enough warning for Hitoshi to roll to

the side and rise to his feet.

“Ooh! It looks like sleeping beauty is finally awake and we’re gonna see some action!” Mic yelled enthusiastically. “What’s gonna happen next?!”

Hitoshi smirked quietly, “You loose.”

Tokoyami furrowed his brow, “We have barely begun the fight, how have I already lost?”

“Dark Shadow.” Hitoshi grinned at the look of shock and fear on Tokoyami’s face as he activated his quirk and Dark Shadow stood at attention, patiently awaiting his instruction. “Drag Tokoyami out of the ring.”

“No!” Tokoyami widened his stance, and tried to push Dark Shadow away, but there was only so much he could do against his own quirk. “Dark Shadow, listen to me! He is controlling your inner darkness! Stop this! Stop! No!”

Hitoshi felt like his vision was tunneling, only able to focus on Dark Shadow as his headache got worse and he had to concentrate with everything he had to keep control with how hard Tokoyami was hitting him. His control felt like it was fraying more with every passing moment, but right before the link seemed about to snap, Tokoyami’s foot crossed the line.

“Tokoyami is out of bounds!” Midnight sounded shocked and it took a full five seconds for the crowd to start cheering. “Shinso advances to the semi-finals!”

Hitoshi released his quirk and grinned proudly, turning to face the place in the stands that he knew the support classes were watching. He only just managed to find Mei and Izuku in the crowd before his eyes rolled back in his head and everything went black.

Chapter End Notes

Next update: 2.19.2021

Breaking Point

Chapter Summary

The semi-finals!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Chicax

Memes!
X X X

was growing up. Looking back, it was kinda stupid, but for some reason he'd thought that he'd mostly be fighting his classmates in flashy fights that would be determined by who was stronger. It was supposed to be simple, straightforward, and easy to understand, but instead he'd gotten a good mix of both 1A, 1B and even a few support and gen-ed thrown into the mix that were actually pretty decent threats. The support students had both disqualified themselves by stepping out of the ring, so he couldn't even assume that everyone's goal was always to win! It made things more complicated and harder to predict, but Kirishima thought he was doing a pretty decent job at rolling with the punches.

Which was what his job was now as well. Bakugo was having a much harder time adjusting to the reality of the festival and Kirishima thought he'd heard something about him being childhood friends with the support student that was supposed to fight him last round, so it made sense that he was getting angry and frustrated. They'd all come into this event with a set of expectations that had been immediately turned on their heads and Bakugo wanted to be the best, so it probably hurt a lot that he'd had his victories swept out from under him in practically every round so far, which was why Kirishima was determined to let his friend fight out all those tricky feelings. He wasn't sure if he'd be able to win, even though he was definitely gonna try, but the support students had shown him that his motivation didn't *have* to be to get first place. It could be just to help his friend feel better.

That didn't mean that it wasn't going to hurt getting pelted with explosion after explosion, but that was why Kirishima had his quirk! The second midnight began the match, Bakugo launched himself forward and Kirishima instinctively hardened his body right as an explosion went off in his face. He immediately returned a punch that Bakugo dodged, but he didn't give up. He'd probably reach his quirk's limits before Bakugo did, and if that happened, the fight would be over.

"It's ok, Baku-bro!" Kirishima grinned and launched another punch. "Let it all out!"

"Shut up, Shitty Hair!" Bakugo yelled back. "This isn't some stupid therapy session, I'm gonna kill you and I'm gonna win!"

Kirishima laughed, "Alright, bro, I believe you! Just keep those explosions coming, I can hardly feel them!"

“That’s because you’re skin is a fucking mountain.” Bakugo grumbled, dodging another one of Kirishima’s blows. “And stop smiling! You’re just like stupid fucking deku!”

“Deku?” Kirishima asked curiously. “Is that the support student you’re friends with?”

“We’re not friends.” Bakugo growled. “I think the nerd made that pretty fucking clear.”

The explosion that followed seemed slightly hotter than some of the others, so Kirishima figured he must have hit a nerve, “Is that part of why you’re so frustrated? He seems like a nice guy, I’m sure you two can work things out!”

“Shut up!” Bakugo let off another huge explosion that made Kirishima hiss as some of his skin chipped under the force. “That stupid nerd gave up! He gave up being a hero and he gave up on our fight before I could even give him the beating he deserved!”

“Well then, don’t give up!” Kirishima shot back, pushing through the urge to soften his body. “You can be better than him!”

“I already am!” Bakugo screamed. “I already am and that’s the point! The idiot deku is looking down on me and he won’t even fight me! I’m a threat, dammit! Fight me!”

Kirishima rolled his eyes and kept talking even though he was quickly running out of breath, “I *am* fighting you, Bakugo.”

“Then why! Didn’t! He!” Every word was punctuated by an explosion and Kirishima felt his quirk finally give out after only two. “He! Owed! Me! A! Fight!”

The smoke cleared and Kirishima didn’t know how he looked, but considering the gasps of the crowd, it couldn’t be good. He could already tell that one eye was swollen shut and the places that his skin had chipped away when he was in his hardened form had already started to bleed.

“You did it, bro. You won.” Kirishima smiled and looked up at his friend, unable to really see his expression with only one eye. “I hope you’re feeling better. Glad I could help.”

He could feel his head spinning until he finally gave into blissful darkness.

“Kirishima is KO’d.” Midnight announced. “Bakugo advances to the finals!”

The stadium erupted into cheers, but Katsuki couldn’t help watching with muted horror as the medbots wheeled Kirishia from the field. That beating hadn’t been meant for him. It had been meant for Deku, but then Deku had flat out refused to fight him. Katsuki’s rage had been growing so much all day that he just needed to take it out on *someone,* and he’d thought that with his quirk, Kirishima would be able to take it, but either Kirishima was weaker than he’d thought, or Katsuki was a lot angrier than he’d realized. He hadn’t meant to really *hurt* him!

Katsuki numbly made his way back into the tunnels, Kirishima’s injuries burned into his brain. That beating hadn’t been meant for him, but he’d taken it because he thought that’s what Katsuki needed. He *did* need it, but...well, maybe he needed a better outlet?

“So, still no idea how Shinso’s quirk works?” Kamakiri asked.

“I almost thought it might be something like verbal response or something.” Kendo said. “But he didn’t say anything to Dark Shadow before taking control of him in the last fight.”

“I think the nap has something to do with it.” Kodai suggested. “He might have a limit of people that he can control before he has to sleep and reset.”

“That would explain why his eyebags are so bad.” Tsuburaba agreed. “But then why wouldn’t he do that backstage? He had time between rounds, right?”

“That she-demon from support probably distracted him.” Monoma dismissed. “But it doesn’t matter, it shouldn't be too difficult to figure out once I get my hands on it.”

Monoma smirked confidently and reached out to grab the quirks he wanted for the fight. Shiozaki’s vines would help him pull Shinso in close so he could steal his quirk, Komorri’s spores would be a good backup plan just in case he wasn’t able to steal brainwashing, and Tetsutetsu’s steel would be good if it came to a hand to hand fight, with the added bonus that he could use it to anchor himself into the concrete so that Shinso couldn’t tell him to walk out of bounds. There was absolutely no way he could lose!

He confidently made his way through the tunnels and out onto the field, where Shinso was already waiting, a bored expression on his face. Midnight nodded to him and Monoma tuned out whatever introductions Present Mic gave before the match officially began. He'd show everyone that 1B was the best in the whole school.

"Begin!"

"So…" Shinso raised one eyebrow, still looking infuriatingly bored. "You're the 1B guy who thinks he's so superior, aren't you?"

"I don't *think* I'm superior." Monoma laughed. "I *am* superior. It's only a matter of time before I take that perfect little brainwashing quirk and turn it against you."

"Is it?" Shinso asked. "Well, I *would* be looking forward to it, if I thought you could actually do it."

Monoma snarled and snapped some vines toward Shinso, who even dodging looked just as bored as he had at the start. Perhaps the lack of expression was his quirk's limit. It would be inconvenient if he had to maintain the same emotion or facial expression to activate brainwashing, but Monoma wouldn't let something small like that keep him from taking his rightful place on the winner's stand.

Shinso was obviously fairly physically fit, because no matter how many vines Monoma sent after him, he just kept dodging! In frustration, Monoma sent a sparse cloud of spores in his direction, just enough to mess with Shinso's breathing and give him the opening he needed. Sure enough, it took less than a minute of this treatment for his opponent to start running out of breath. Monoma smirked and finally wrapped Shinso in tight vines from his shoulders down, then sauntered up to him and within seconds, had a copy of his quirk replacing the spores. It was like taking candy from a baby.

"Well, time to finally solve the mystery!" Monoma laughed. "How does this quirk…"

His copy of brainwashing only gave him a few seconds of warning before his mind started going fuzzy. If he hadn't already copied the quirk, he probably wouldn't have gotten any warning at all, but as it was he had barely enough time to harden his body into steel and drive his feet into the concrete before he lost control of his body entirely.

"Cute." Shinso smiled. "But unfortunately, not enough. Deactivate your quirk."

The vines loosened and Monoma's skin reverted back to it's normal texture as he was forced to let go of his stockpile of quirks. Shinso's hold on his mind just got tighter as Monoma's copy dissipated into nothing more than hopeless wisps of smoke in his mind. He would have grit his teeth if he had any control left, but unfortunately, he was nothing better than a trained monkey that could only follow orders.

"Pull your feet from the ground, *gently*. Then walk out of bounds."

The rough edges of the broken concrete scraped at his legs, but the pain wasn't enough to really bother him as he pulled himself from the ground and started slowly making his way toward the line. There was a slightly pained expression on Shinso's face as Monoma passed him, like he was having to fight to maintain his quirk and Monoma felt a brief ray of hope. Whatever move he'd pulled during his fight with that birdbrain from 1A had made him pass out, so he must still be tired from it! If he could just find a way to maybe slow down and stay in the ring for long enough for quirk exhaustion to set in.

Unfortunately, he wasn't having much luck and he was starting to have trouble focusing on escaping since the scrapes on his legs were starting to sting. One of the cuts throbbed and there was a split second where Monoma almost felt like himself again before Shinso's hold over him tightened again.

Pull your feet from the ground, gently.

If Shinso had just wanted him to free himself, he would have just ordered Monoma to pull himself from the ground, but he didn't. He took the time to specify that he did so gently so that he wouldn't injure himself! Monoma smirked internally and focused on the pain. Shinso had obviously had practiced maintaining control in non-optimal conditions, but if the link was mental, if Monoma was more aware of the pain he was in, that might be enough to strain the link and make it more difficult for Shinso to maintain the connection.

He heard Shinso let out a sharp breath and then Monoma's head finally cleared. He cheered in triumph and whirled around, feet less than a foot from the line, "Nice try, gen-ed, but you're going to have to try harder if you want to beat a member of class 1B!"

Shinso lowered himself into a fighting stance, "I guess we'll just have to do this the old fashioned way."

Monoma laughed as Shinso ran toward him and reached out to steal his quirk again. Now that he had a taste of it, he had no doubt that

he'd be able to figure it out quickly and turn this fight around. He blocked a punch to the face by grabbing Shinso's wrist and started to explore the quirk, but before he had a chance to really understand it, his feet were being swept out from underneath him. His eyes widened and he instinctively loosened his hold on Shinso's wrist, which turned out to be a mistake because the next thing he felt was Shinso planting both hands on his chest and shoving him as hard as he could. Monoma stumbled, just barely managing to maintain his footing, and tensed for the next attack.

"Monoma is out of bounds!" Midnight yelled. "Shinso advances to the finals!"

"What?!" Monoma looked down, hoping that perhaps Midnight had made a mistake, but sure enough, he was two inches away from the line, *on the wrong side.* He'd lost. Not only had he lost, he'd lost to some nobody from general education! He growled and let go of Shinso's quirk in frustration. How?!

Monoma expected Shinso to make some snarky comment rubbing in his win, but to his surprise, Shinso simply turned around and started heading back to the tunnels.

"What, you're not even going to acknowledge your win?" Monoma snarled. "Do you really think you're so much better than the rest of us that I don't even merit a snide insult?"

Shinso looked over his shoulder and raised one eyebrow, almost like he thought the answer was obvious, then a look of confusion passed over his face briefly before something seemed to click. A smirk slowly made its way onto Shinso's face, but he didn't make any other response before he turned back around and disappeared into the tunnels.

"Alright, the lights are off, and we already gave you water…" Izuku fretted. "Is there anything else we can do?"

"It's just a migraine, Izuku…" Hitoshi groaned. "I get them all the time and I overused my quirk against Tokoyami, so it was gonna happen anyway. We're just lucky that blond kid's an idiot and didn't bother to figure out my quirk after the match, otherwise the secret would be out."

"He's not an idiot, Hitoshi, be nice!" Izuku squeaked. "He's actually got semi-decent grades and he's at UA, so even that...

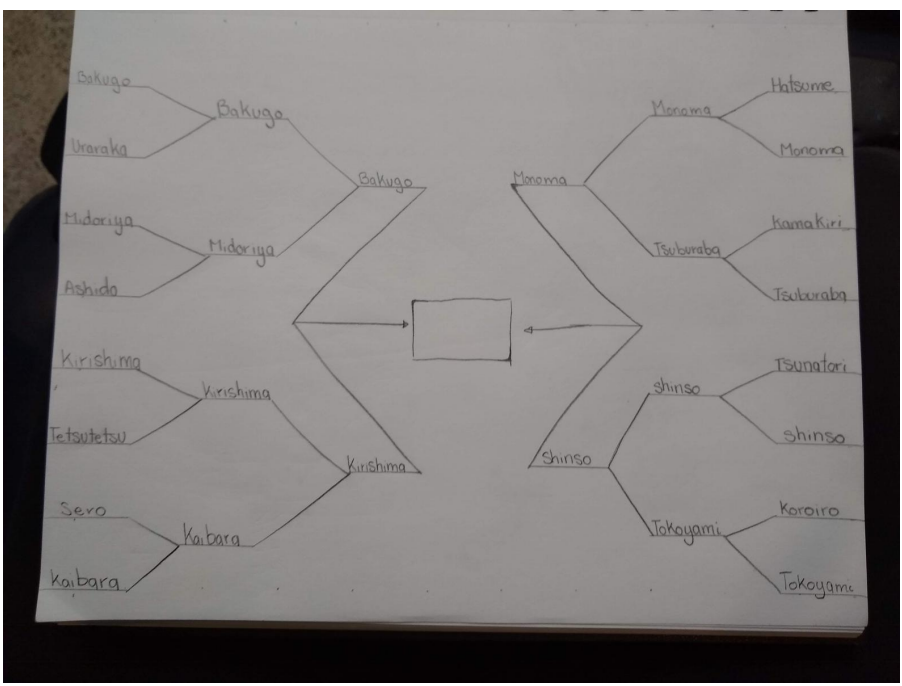
Hitoshi tuned him out as he felt something cool touch his forehead. He cracked one eye open to see Mei holding some kind of ice pack that he was 90% sure she'd only brought along in case one of her inventions overheated.

"Be quiet, Izu-kun!" Mei whisper-yelled. "Don't you know that too much noise makes migraines worse?"

"But you…!"

"Quiet!"

Mei glared at Izuku until he started silently pouting and Hitoshi couldn't hold back a small smile as he closed his eyes again and settled back into whatever nap he would be able to get between rounds. Considering that, from what he'd gathered, his next opponent used to be Izuku's bully, he'd need every second of rest he could get.



Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 2.25.2021

Final

Chapter Summary

The Sports Festival Conclusion!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Cat Grandma

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, we should ask 1B what that Shinso guy’s quirk is!” Kirishima grinned and jumped to see over the wall between their classes. “Hey, guys! Have you figured out how that gen-ed student’s quirk activates?”

“Shut up Shitty Hair!” Katsuki grabbed him by the collar and dragged him back. “I don’t need those stupid extra’s help to win! I’ll do it on my own, got it?”

Kirishima yelped and rubbed at his neck, but Katsuki was 90% sure that was just for show. Recovery Girl had patched him up pretty well, so he just had a few bandages and none of his injuries would even scar, so Bakugo was trying not to feel too bad about it. If he let himself think too much about it, he just started feeling *more* angry, which defeated the whole point of him taking things out on Kirishima to begin with. Luckily his next fight was with Deku’s creepy brainwashing friend, so even if he couldn’t take things out on the guy who deserved it, he’d at least be able to beat someone associated with him. He couldn’t wait.

“Even if your pomeranian *was* willing to accept our help, we wouldn’t tell you.” Monoma grinned as he peeked over the wall. “That information is a class b secret, so why would we willingly assist our rivals?”

“He’s only saying that because he hasn’t figured it out yet!” Kaminari laughed. “Your class is just as clueless as ours is!”

Monoma’s face turned red and he seemed like he was about to say

something, but before he could that Kendo girl with the big hands gave him a karate chop to the neck and some other members of his class dragged him back down to their seats. Kendo sighed and gave their class an apologetic smile, “Sorry about him, he gets a little carried away.”

“It’s quite alright!” Momo said kindly. “But Bakugo should probably be getting ready for his fight unless you have any info.”

“I already told you, I don’t want your damn pity help!” Katsuki yelled.

“We’re clueless anyway. Our best guess is that he has to cause a certain level of confusion in his opponent before his quirk can take hold.” Kendo shrugged. “But good luck!”

“Don’t need it.” Katsuki huffed. “I’m the best.”

He rolled his eyes and ignored the shouting of all the extras as he stalked out to go to the prep areas. He was in prep room one, right? He glared at nothing and didn’t talk to anyone until he found the room and kicked the door in, only to be met by Deku, Deku’s crazy girlfriend, and the brainwashing extra.

He saw red, “What the hell are you doing in my room?!”

Deku had the balls to glare at him, “This is Hitoshi’s prep room, Katsuki. Prep room two. You’re in prep room one.”

“This *is* prep room…” Katsuki glanced at the door and scowled. “Whatever, Deku. You’re lucky I don’t pound you to the ground right now!”

“We’re still on school property.” Deku said confidently. “And Nedzu has cameras everywhere. Not to mention that if I end up with unexplained injuries, there’s live footage of you threatening me. How would you explain *that* to Eraserhead, I wonder?”

Katsuki let out a few threatening explosions in his hands, but that was all he could do. Unfortunately, Deku was right, but that just meant he’d have to work extra hard in the next fight to make sure the nerd and his dumb friends knew their place.

“Both of you, shut up!” That crazy bitch who played Monoma for a fool in the first round stalked up to them, hands on her hips as she glared up at him, “Your stupid shouting is bothering Extra-Credit-Kun!”

Katsuki glanced over and, sure enough, the purple-haired extra was grimacing and he had his arm held over his eyes like he was trying to block out the light. Katsuki resisted the urge to smirk at the obvious display of weakness and turned to leave. He didn't know why he'd ever been worried, he had this fight in the bag.

"Later, Deku." Katsuki threw over his shoulder. "Can't wait for your friend to give up just like you did."

He let the door slam shut behind him.

"Any word from our spy?"

Tomura glared at the television set. Sensei had left him alone during the fights, but he kept nagging him anytime the students weren't actively fighting, "No. Cheat Code hasn't shown his stupid cheater face, but considering the packets he gave all the baby heroes, he has to be watching."

"Yes…" Sensei said thoughtfully. "I read through the information he provided our spy. He has a good eye for quirks and his analysis is well developed, but his formatting is immature...keep me updated on any leads on that front. Are any of the students catching your eye?"

Tomura shrugged, "They've got a rager on their team."

"Ah, yes, young Bakguo." Sensei agreed. "You should keep an eye on him, young Tomura, perhaps we can find a way to turn him to our side. Some of the other students have potential as well, do they not?"

"Maybe the brainwashing kid." Tomura frowned. "But he's got those NPC's who won't leave him alone…"

"Perhaps that's not such a bad thing." Sensei pointed out patiently. "Having good support can make the difference between success and failure."

"So, they're more like party members?" Shigaraki frowned. "I guess it's hard to win a dungeon with only fighters…"

"Just keep it in mind." Sensei said. "And watch carefully. These students will be your enemies soon enough, young Tomura."

Hitoshi's head was still pounding when he stepped out onto the field, squinting his eyes in the harsh sunlight and trying to ignore the

roaring of the crowds. Thankfully, Recovery Girl had given him some pretty strong pain killers for the fight, but this fight still wasn't going to be *fun,* especially since he was fighting a bully that someone had decided to strap a nuke to. A few months ago, he might have thought winning this fight was as impossible as beating a bunch of robots, but he was stronger now.

And he was here to win.

Midnight gave Bakugo a warning glare, but she didn't stop him as he set off a few warm-up explosions in his palms. Hitoshi had to concentrate hard not to wince at the noise. When this was over, he was going to sleep for a solid three days.

"Alright, boys, I want a good clean fight!" Midnight warned them. "Remember, you're here to win, not to kill each other."

Hitoshi figured that was meant for Bakugo, not him. He'd seen Kirishima in the nurse's office after the last round: Bakugo could be brutal when he wanted to be. Hitoshi's best bet would be to not give him a chance to hurt him. The only trick was getting him to talk.

"The final fight begins in three, two, one…" Midnight cracked her whip. "Begin!"

Hitoshi opened his mouth to say something, only to be blindsided by a bright *boom* just feet from his face. He hissed and ducked away as his head started throbbing. Shit.

"Your stupid quirk hurts your head, doesnt it?" When the smoke cleared, Bakugo was smirking down at him. "People forget that quirks are physical abilities and can get tired just like anything else and you? You've been using that stupid brainwashing quirk since we got here."

Hitoshi swore and rolled to dodge another explosion, then jumped to his feet and ran as fast as he could to put some distance between them. His eyes were watering so much that he could only hope that he wasn't getting close to the line. He just needed to get him to talk and then this fight would be over. He just needed a response.

"I don't know what Deku even sees in you." Bakugo snarled, letting off another explosion far too close to Hitoshi's face to be comfortable. "You're just a weakling and a future villain to boot, with that quirk of yours. You should just give up now!"

Hitoshi swallowed thickly. He felt like he was about to throw up, but

he couldn't give up. He wouldn't give up! He wasn't going to let all of the training and help he'd received go to waste. He was going to be a hero!

"Seems to me like you're the one acting like a villain." Hitoshi grit out. "And why are you so obsessed with Izuku? I bet you admire him, don't you? You want to be just like him!"

"I'd never want to be like that nerd!" Bakugo let loose an explosion so powerful that it chipped the concrete where Hitoshi had been a half-second before. "He's *nothing,* got it? He's not even a pebble on the side of my path to greatness!"

Hitoshi's head was pounding so badly that he could barely feel the link as it finally formed. Bakugo was readying another explosion, but Hitoshi forced himself to stand tall and stare him down, even as he charged to begin his attack. He was going to be a hero.

He activated his quirk and Bakugo immediately stopped in his tracks like a puppet whose strings had been cut. His hold was a lot more shaky than it usually was and he could feel Bakugo fighting against his control, but Hitoshi took a few deep breaths. If his brain took control of his victim's body, then maybe he could force Bakguo to calm down by going through those same motions himself.

After a few moments, Bakugo's shoulders slumped and even though Hitoshi could still feel him fighting, it was weaker than it had been a few minutes before as the adrenaline started ebbing away. Hitoshi kept breathing and the crowd held their breaths as they waited to see what happened.

"You're wrong." Hitoshi's voice was scratchy from exhaustion, smoke and dust, but he pushed through anyway. "Izuku is a lot more than a pebble that you can crush into powder or kick off the sidewalk. He's a brilliant analyst and the only thing you accomplished by tossing him aside was shooting yourself in the foot."

That obviously made Bakugo angry because he started fighting harder again and it took all of Hitoshi's concentration to maintain his control. He was starting to feel lightheaded and the only thought he could form that wasn't pure *pain* was that he had to win. He had to win to be a hero.

Hitoshi set his shoulders confidently, "Walk out of bounds. Lose for me."

Bakugo fought with everything he had, but none of that showed on his face. No, the real fight was happening in Hitoshi's brain and the only thing the crowd could do was watch with bated breath as the top hero student took those final few steps out of bounds, and then everything exploded into so much noise that Hitoshi was forced to instinctively release his control. He immediately screwed his eyes closed and slammed his hands over his ears, but he could still hear Bakguo growling and using his explosions to launch himself back toward his opponent.

Thankfully, the sounds of Bakugo's renewed attack were quickly muffled by what sounded like one of Cemontoss's walls, and Hitoshi could barely hear Midnight above the roaring of the crowd as she made the announcement, "Katsuki Bakugo is out of bounds! Hitoshi Shinso wins the sports festival!"

"I don't understand how he's not dying of embarrassment." Shiguro muttered, his goblin ears twitching in second-hand embarrassment. "I'd be mortified if I had to be chained up on national television like that."

"He's an asshole." Kohaku said dismissively. "He sees being angry as a personality trait, so obviously, he's gonna have to be held back."

"Still, it seems like he'd just take the loss at this point." Hanzou observed.

"Katsuki doesn't give up." Izuku said. "He never has and he's never been satisfied being anything but the best. Even if it wasn't Shinso in first place, he would probably still be throwing a fit, just because he didn't get what he wanted."

"He's a spoiled brat, that's what he is." Mei complained. "But we did it! Extra-Credit-Kun won the sports festival! We're gonna get our extra credit Izu-kun!"

"Don't you two only get extra credit if he actually transfers into the hero course?" Kohaku argued.

"Not technically." Izuku said, smiling widely as All Might placed a medal around Shinso's neck. "But that's always been the goal."

"As if the teachers could actually say that the winner of the sports festival doesn't deserve a place in the hero course." Hanzou snorted. "Let's be honest, the only thing holding him back now is paperwork."

Izuku's cheeks were starting to hurt from how widely he was smiling, but he just couldn't stop. They'd done it. All that training, all of his analysis, it really made a difference! His new dream was worthwhile and he was already doing it! He was helping heroes become better and that was almost worth everything he'd had to go through to get on this path.

"Come on, Izu-kun!" Mei grabbed his hand the moment that the awards ceremony ended. "Let's go see our baby!"

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.03.2021

Out

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the sports festival

Chapter Notes

Art!
xXJoshowoXx
EmEm
Die_sonne
Flumphish
khoshekh the (not) cat
Claire ;)

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mei slammed open the door to Recovery Girl's office and Izuku had to jump to grab the handle and prevent the door from banging into the wall. He smiled sheepishly at Recovery Girl, who was glaring at him, and he could only hope he was apologetic enough for both of them because Mei didn't even give Recovery Girl a second glance as she made a beeline toward the bed Hitoshi was lying on.

"Extra-credit-kun!" Mei squealed. "You did so good!"

Both Izuku and Recovery Girl shushed her when Hitoshi winced, "Nice to see you too Mei, but can you be excited any quieter?"

"Oh...sorry!" Mei whispered loudly. "You did amazing!"

Izuku stifled a quiet chuckle. Mei was trying her best, but it was still entertaining watching someone who was so undeniably *loud* trying to be quiet. It was like asking Izuku not to mutter. It was theoretically possible, but that didn't mean it wasn't funny to watch. He stopped laughing when Recovery Girl glared at him again.

"You had *better* be quiet!" she scolded. "It's the least you two gremlins can do for the poor boy, considering that it's at least partially your fault he's in this state!"

Izuku looked at Mei in confusion, but she just shrugged helplessly and turned back to playing with Hitoshi's hair. He relaxed slightly under her touch and wrinkled his nose at the school nurse, "It's my own fault that I went over my limits, Recovery Girl. Don't blame my kidnappers just because I'm an idiot."

"They encouraged you to be reckless!" Recovery Girl argued.

"Yeah, well, they encouraged me to be a hero too, so there." Hitoshi groaned. "I would be just fine if I hadn't tried taking control of Dark Shadow though Tokoyami."

"So you *did* do that!" It took all of Izuku's self control to keep talking quietly. "I was wondering, because I didn't *think* you said anything to Dark Shadow directly, but then you took control of him and not Tokoyami and it was so cool!"

Hitoshi gave a tired chuckle, "Yeah, well, we'll see if it was even worth it. I still don't know if they'll let me transfer or if they'll keep me stuck in gen ed."

Mei poked the medal that was still around his neck, "They'd be idiots not to let you into the hero course after this. You're gonna be an amazing hero Extra-credit-kun, and if those stupid teachers can't see that, then…"

"Then what?" Hitoshi cracked one eye open and smirked at her. "You're gonna blow up Nedzu's office?"

Mei huffed, "Well what if I did, huh? What are they gonna do about it?"

"Can we please not threaten the teachers when there's one in the room?" Izuku fretted, glancing nervously over at Recovery Girl. "Mei, at least wait until we're outside of UA!"

"I quite agree. In fact, you should save all of this until you're outside of UA! Out!" Recovery Girl ordered. "Shinso needs rest and you two obviously have far too much energy. You can give him congratulations once he's recovered."

"But…" Mei tried, but Recovery girl simply swept her cane at their legs until the two caved in and let themselves be shooed toward the door. "We'll see you later Extra-Credit-kun!"

"Yeah!" Izuku added. "Thanks for beating Katsuki! That was

awesome!”

Izuku smiled at the sight of Hitoshi practically giggling as Recovery Girl forced them out and shut the door behind them with a quiet finality. He could begrudgingly admit that Recovery Girl was probably right and they were a little too much to help someone recover from a quirk-induced migraine, but at least Hitoshi knew they were proud of him and they’d made him laugh!

“Well, that was rude!” Mei pouted. “Is spending a little time with our baby too much to ask for?!”

Izuku shook his head, “You realize that even your whispers are loud, right? And you have a habit of blowing things up if you stay in one room for too long.”

Mei opened her mouth to argue, but closed it again, “Fine. You might *maybe* have a little bit of a point.”

“Thank you.” Izuku grinned. “That’s why I’m the smart one!”

Mei gasped, “What?! Mr. Let’s Blow Up All the Landmines?! Smart?!”

Izuku started laughing, but then the door behind them swung open again and both Izuku and Mei jumped when Recovery Girl poked her head out to glare at them, “Shhh!”

Mei grabbed Izuku’s hand and started dragging him down the hall, “Come on Izu-kun! I think I can tell when we’re not wanted.”

“I don’t think you even want to.” Izuku muttered with a smile, "So...where are we going?"

"Uh…" Mei stopped suddenly in the middle of the hallway, making Izuku run into her. "I, uh, hadn't gotten that far, I guess."

Izuku felt a buzz in his pocket and hesitantly took his phone out of his pocket. He shot Mei a curious look, but she simply shrugged. Izuku turned back to his phone suspiciously and read the new message.

From: Rat Overlord

You could always try exploring the tunnels!

The drive home was awkward at best.

Shouto stared sullenly out the window as he waited for his father to explode. It was inevitable, he knew. He'd known ever since he'd seen Tokoyami steal the headbands from around his neck, but it had been confirmed when Endeavor had dismissed their usual driver and said he'd drive Shouto home himself. At least if they were surrounded by staff, his father showed at least the bare minimum of restraint, but without that protective barrier, Shouto had no idea when the tirade would start. It was exhausting.

Finally, Endeavor broke the silence, "Did you really lose just to spite me?"

His voice was deathly quiet and Shouto froze. His father's anger normally ran hot, but somehow it was always more frightening when he was cold like this. Yelling, fire, tirades, those were things Shouto had been enduring for years, he knew how to handle them, how to coat his mind and body in ice so the fire couldn't hurt him, but this? This had only happened a few times, which meant that Shouto had no idea if his usual strategies would work. He had messed up even more than usual and was going into his father's rage almost completely blind.

He set his shoulders stubbornly and glared at his father in the rearview mirror. He refused to let the fear show. Losing to his classmates was one thing, but he refused to lose to his father.

"You could have won." Endeavor observed quietly. "You could have stopped that bird-brain from stealing your points if you'd just used your fire."

"Your fire." Shouto snapped before he could stop himself. "It's *your* fire, not mine and I'm going to make it to the top without it."

"Well you seem to be doing a bang up job of that so far." Endeavor spat. "Your ice didn't even get you past the second round. "

"I…"

"What?" Endeavor scoffed. "You'll be the best with only your mother's power? I believe you found out today just where this childish rebellion will lead you Shouto. If you hadn't shamed me so much by allowing general education and support students to surpass you, I'd almost be *happy* you lost. At least now hopefully you've learned your lesson."

Shouto flinched as if he'd been slapped. His father was happy he'd

lost. His own father. And it wasn't even for a good reason, was it? No, it was because Endeavor was hoping that losing the sports festival would *teach him a lesson.* Well, he was wrong. Shouto refused to be the masterpiece that Endeavor wanted him to be.

And to make it worse, even if his father was happy, he was still going to get punished, just because of who he'd lost to. He hadn't even fought that team directly. The only interaction he'd even had with them was when they'd destroyed the ten million point headband, but his father didn't care about that. The only thing his father even cared about was that a general education student had won the sports festival while Shouto had been pushed to the sidelines and that was completely unacceptable.

"I raised you better than this." Endeavor lectured. "You were created to surpass All Might, Shouto, so act like it! You've been blessed with the perfect quirk and I've given you as much training as I could, but that's all going to be for nothing if you keep acting like a spoiled little brat. I made you to become a great hero, Shouto, my masterpiece. So stop wasting that potential and actually *be* my successor."

"Maybe that's the problem." For some reason, Shouto couldn't stop the words from spilling out. "I'm *your* masterpiece, right? And you're an eternal failure. You've been number two for how long again? Face it, Endeavor, I'm *your* son, so can you really expect me to be any better than second best?"

Endeavor slammed on the brakes with enough force that Shouto went launching forward and hit his head on the seat in front of him, "What did you say?"

Shouto gripped his nose, which was now bleeding, and tried to stop the blood from getting on the car's upholstery, "You heard me, old man. I'm a better failure than you ever were."

Endeavor glared at him for a long moment, then unlocked the doors, "Out."

Shouto stared at him in shock, "...what?"

"Out." Endeavor growled. "If you don't appreciate everything I've given you, then maybe you don't deserve it. You insist on acting like a spoiled child, Shouto, so let's see if a night on the streets will help you grow up."

Shouto opened and closed his mouth a few times, but there really

wasn't anything to say. He ripped the door open and didn't even grab his phone as he got out of the car and slammed the door behind him. He half expected Endeavor to roll down his window and say that it had just been a logical ruse, like Aizawa always did, but no. As soon as the door was closed, his father just...drove away. Just abandoned Shouto on the side of an almost deserted street like he was nothing. Maybe he was.

The few people on the street were beginning to stare, not that homeless people and druggies were probably that interested in the downfall of the great son of Endeavor, but still, his father would get even more angry if the media got wind of this. Thankfully, Shouto had changed into street clothes after the sports festival, so at least he was in jeans and a hoodie instead of his school uniform. That would have been harder to pass off.

Even if he walked home, Endeavor probably wouldn't let Fuyumi let him in, so Shouto shoved his hands in his pockets and resolved to just wander the streets until the sun rose and his punishment was over. He gave one last look down the street, but Endeavor's car had already turned the corner out of sight. Shouto shook his head and cut through an alley, grabbing a beanie he'd found on the ground as he passed. It was a little too big and smelled like cigarette smoke, but at least it would cover his hair. There wasn't much he could do about his scar at the moment, but whatever, it was only one night, right?

"Yeah! Those cheerleading outfits were amazing!" Mineta drooled. "Yaoyorozu really outdid herself this time!"

"I guess so…" Kaminari grinned. "Still not looking forward to the detention Aizawa's gonna give us, though."

"He just doesn't appreciate art!" Mineta complained. "It's like he's gay or something!"

Kaminari shrugged awkwardly, "I dunno. I gotta get going, man, but I'll see you Monday, alright?"

"Sure thing!" Mineta gave him a big thumbs up. "See you Monday!"

Kaminari gave a wave when he reached the end of the street and Mineta waited until he disappeared around the corner to let his smile fall. Hopefully the whole gay comment would get the guy to leave him alone. Everyone avoided the class pervert, but it was much more difficult to get ignored when someone as loud as Kaminari kept

seeking him out. It was irritating.

Mineta was taking a shortcut home though the bad part of town when his phone rang. The caller ID was blocked, but he thought he had a pretty good idea of who it was, “How did you enjoy the sports festival? Pretty good show, right?”

Kurogiri was business-like as always as he responded, “Sensei has a few students he wants you to keep an eye on.”

“Did he say who?” Mineta asked. “I’m already watching everyone in 1A. Class 1B will be a little more difficult, but I think I can manage.”

“Actually, there’s a mix this time.” Kurogiri informed him. “Shigaraki has suggested that young Bakugo might be a good addition to our organization, so test the waters there.”

“If he doesn’t blow my head off first.” Mineta grumbled. “Fine, who else?”

“That is for you to discover.” Kurogiri said cryptically. “Sensei believes that Cheat Code might be a student.”

Mineta almost tripped over a crack in the sidewalk, “What?! Seriously?!”

“Are you questioning Sensei’s judgement?” Kurogiri asked, far too calmly.

Mineta gulped, clearly hearing the threat hidden behind the words, “No, of course not. I was just surprised is all. The analysis the guy gave me on my quirk was pretty intense.”

“His analytical skill is advanced beyond his years, true.” A new voice joined the call and Mineta froze. “But he is inexperienced. That being said, it is most likely an upperclassman in the hero course, although the support course is another likely option. I would like you to see what you can find out. Will that be a problem?”

“N-no, Sensei.” Mineta stuttered. “I’ll put in a request to adjust my hero costume and start keeping an eye on the upperclassmen first thing on monday.”

“Good.” Sensei sounded like he was smiling. “And good work on the sports festival. You’re exactly where we need you to be.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.09.2021

Duality

Chapter Summary

The evening after the sports festival.

Chapter Notes

Art!
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Maya
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Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku and Mei were starting to get frustrated. Izuku was sitting crosslegged on the floor of the hallway, laptop open in front of him with every blueprint of UA he could possibly hack into, but so far there hadn't been any mention of tunnels or how to get in. He'd tried texting Nedzu for any sort of a hint, but all he'd gotten back was a winky face and he'd had to hide his phone to prevent Mei from stealing it and throwing it against the wall in frustration.

"Are you sure Nedzu isn't just pulling on your leg or something?" Mei groaned. "I swear, we've walked around the entire school three times! I swear, if that rat is just sitting in his office and laughing as we run around in circles..."

"He wouldn't do that." Izuku said. "Well, actually, the laughing as we run around in circles part, yes, definitely, he's probably doing that right now, but if there *weren't* actually tunnels, he wouldn't be having any fun. Nedzu likes knowing something that other people don't and enjoys watching them struggle to figure it out. It's part of why he went into education."

"So if there weren't actually tunnels, he wouldn't be able to feel superior?" Mei complained, falling back onto the floor and staring at the ceiling. "Ugh, where are we even supposed to start looking? There's nothing in the blueprints, right?"

"Nope." Izuku snapped his laptop shut and stretched. "But you know

that would be too easy. The entrance or, more likely entrances, are probably well hidden and most likely require some sort of code, otherwise anyone would be able to access them. But UA is built like a maze, so…"

Mei sat up, "So maybe there's a false dead end!"

Izuku grinned and opened his laptop again, "Of course! For Nedzu, it would probably be hilarious to see students reach a deadend hallway and turn around, completely unaware that there was a secret waiting for them. Great idea, Mei!"

Mei grinned wildly, "So which wall do I need to blow up?"

Izuku rolled his eyes, "You're not blowing up any walls, that's cheating. Remember, this is supposed to be fun!"

"Blowing up walls *is* fun." Mei complained. "But sure, we'll try it your way and I can just blow up the wall of Nedzu's office later!"

"You realize he's probably listening, right?" Izuku pointed out.

"Just let him try and stop me!" Mei punched at the air. "It'll just be even more fun to break past all his defenses!"

Izuku shook his head and turned back to his computer, "Alright, so according to the blueprints, there are at least a dozen end hallways hidden around UA, but the closest one is...oh, there's one between prep rooms four and five!"

Mei jumped up, "Race you there? Whoever's last has to clean up the testing room next class."

Izuku grinned as he put his laptop away and let her pull him to his feet, "You're on!"

Mei instantly shot down the hallway like a bullet, and Izuku was forced to catch up, laptop case bouncing against his side as he followed her laughter. Even if they didn't end up finding the tunnels, this was a great way to spend the evening.

No one came to pick Hitoshi up from the sports festival, but then again, he didn't expect them to. Yeah, taking the train with the last remnants of a migraine wasn't *fun,* but it wasn't like he hadn't done it before, so he just waited in Recovery Girl's office until after the

evening rush and then headed home once there wouldn't be so many people. He got a couple weird looks and a few thumbs up as people recognized his gym uniform or caught sight of the medal stuffed into his pocket, but thankfully most people didn't give him a second glance and it wasn't long before he was walking up the steps of his foster home, ready to make a bee line for his room and pass out.

He wasn't that lucky.

When he opened the door, some of the kids were huddled around the tv and Hitoshi froze when he realized the news was showing highlights from the sports festival. He didn't know why it hadn't occurred to him that his foster family might see it, probably because school felt *safe.* When he was around Izuku and Mei, he felt like he could take on the word, and honestly with the amount of chaos those two caused, he probably could, but at home things were different. Mei and Izuku looked at his quirk and they saw *him,* a person with potential to be a future hero, so to them, him winning the sports festival was the ultimate goal and an amazing accomplishment that he should be proud of, but something told Hitoshi that his foster parents might not see it that way. He passed the kitchen as silently as he could as he hurried toward the stairs, but all the stealth practice in the world wouldn't help when someone was already waiting to pounce.

"You lied to them."

Hitoshi flinched and slowly turned to look at his foster dad. He towered beside the table as his wife sat down, shoulders hunched and eyes red like she'd been crying. Hitoshi didn't say anything, obviously. He wasn't stupid. He just kept his eyes down as his foster father stalked across the room toward him.

"You didn't even give them a chance to fight back." he growled. "You lied to them so they wouldn't be able to stop you from getting in their heads. If they'd known how your quirk works, there's no way you would have gotten first place. So no wonder you won, boy, since you were willing to act like a little villain!"

Hitoshi opened his mouth to defend himself, but thankfully caught himself before he could make *that* mistake. The bastard was *right* , afterall. If he hadn't hidden his quirk's activation requirements, he would never have been able to get first place. The hero course students may not have had the support course in their corner, but they weren't stupid. If Hitoshi had gone with his original plan and let his quirk stand on its own, he would only have been able to win one fight,

maybe a few more if he was lucky, but eventually, he would have come up against someone with more self-control than he was able to handle.

So he'd lied. He'd followed Izuku's advice and kept people guessing so that no one knew they weren't supposed to talk to him and his classmates in general education were too scared to say anything. Hitoshi wasn't sure if they were more scared of him and his quirk or of Mei and Izuku, who somehow managed to say something concerning every single time they appeared in his classroom, but at the end of the day, his foster father was right. He had taken advantage of fear, confusion, and deception to claw his way to the top, just like a villain would. Anything he said to try to defend himself would only make it worse.

"I thought you were trying to be good." his foster mother sobbed quietly. "You were going to UA and everything, so why did you take advantage of those poor kids like that?"

Hitoshi balled his hands into fists at his sides and forced himself to stay silent. It was harder than it should have been. After so many homes like this one and so many teachers who had never heard his voice, it should have been easy to bite his tongue, but if anything, his kidnappers *encouraged* him to talk. They wanted to hear his jokes and opinions and never assumed he would control them, except for when they asked him to, and wasn't *that* a welcome change? They'd made him feel like it wasn't bad to be dangerous, because they were both dangerous too. They'd spoiled him by listening to his voice and now it hurt even more to be silent. He hated it.

"You're grounded." his foster dad informed him. "If and when you return to UA, I expect you to write apology letters to everyone you hurt and tell them how your quirk *actually* works. Do you understand?"

Hitoshi gave a curt nod and turned toward the stairs, knowing that was as much of a dismissal as he'd get. The mystery surrounding his quirk had been nice while it lasted, but he should have known better than to think it would always be that way. His quirk made him a future villain and that was all anyone would ever see. He finally reached his room and fell facedown on the mattress. Why did he even try?

The sun had set a little while ago and for once in his life, Shouto was

actually grateful for his fire. At least he didn't have to worry about getting cold while wandering around the city when he could regulate his own body temperature. He'd already decided that he wasn't going to be sleeping tonight. He didn't know what places were even close to safe, and the idea of being defenseless like that made him shiver. He'd gone nights without sleep before for Endeavor's training, and this was basically the same thing. Same for food and water. It was one night. He'd survive.

He didn't know quite where he was, just that he'd never been there before, but he wasn't too concerned. If he wandered for long enough, he'd eventually have to find something he recognized and then he'd be able to find his way home. Shouto kept his head down and kicked a rock a little ways down the street. He really was embracing his role as the family screw-up at this point, wasn't he? He'd lost the sports festival to someone from gen-ed, he'd talked back to Endeavor, and he'd even gotten kicked out. This day just kept getting better, didn't it?

He heard a small clatter behind him and instantly whirled around, dropping into a battle stance as his eyes ficked around to look for the threat. He didn't relax when all he found was an empty street. He resisted the urge to call out and ask who was there like some horror movie protagonist. No, he was a hero student and he was more than capable of defending himself against whatever came at him.

Shouto jumped a foot in the air and coated the ground with ice as something brushed past his leg. He stayed tense, ready to battle whatever villain was stupid enough to attack him...until said *villain* started hissing at him and he realized that he'd gotten all worked up over a stray cat that was now very angry and had all four of it's paws frozen to the ground. So much for not being a horror movie protagonist.

"Sorry about that." Shouto knelt down slowly and activated his left side to melt the ice. "I guess I really am a screw-up, huh? I bet Endeavor never accidentally attacked a cat thinking it was a villain."

The cat puffed up it's orange fur and hissed at him, but the moment the ice started to melt around its paws, it hesitantly relaxed. Slowly, keeping a close eye on Shouto in case he attacked again, the cat licked at the water left behind on the ground, then sat down and started cleaning it's paws. Shouto sighed and let himself slump down against the wall of the alley. At least he hadn't hurt the cat, at least not permanently, so he wasn't turning into his father yet. Small blessings.

The cat started to make its way toward him and Shouto moved to get up, only for the cat to bristle up again and start hissing until he stayed still again. Apparently, any movement on his part would be instantly seen as threatening, but he supposed he deserved that after trapping the poor thing in ice. He had enough scars from training, so Shouto wasn't really interested in adding more to that, just because he'd pissed off a cat. It wasn't as if he was planning on doing anything tonight anyway, so he settled down, content to spend the next however long catering to the whims of a frightened kitten. He was kind of clueless, though, considering he'd never had a pet. Endeavor wasn't the best person around humans, so their family had never really been interested in testing how he would treat animals.

He watched curiously as the cat continued drinking what remained of his ice, gradually getting closer and closer to him, but never making any move to attack him. He stayed as still as he could, which was extremely still, up until the moment the cat jumped on him. He tensed, ready to shove the cat away at the first sign it was going to scratch him, but it just hissed once and stared at him until he hesitantly started to relax again. The cat waited another long moment, ears twitching as it looked at him, and Shouto noticed that one of its ears had a bite torn out of it. Both the ear and the other wounds that Shouto could see were long since scarred over, but it was pretty obvious that this cat was used to fighting its way through the streets and one wrong move was going to get him matching scars. After what seemed like an eternity, the cat let out a satisfied yawn and curled up on his thigh. Shouto sighed. It looked like he was going to be here a while.

The concrete was cold, as was the brick behind him, so Shouto increased his body temperature slightly so he didn't start shivering and annoy the cat, but he wasn't quite sure what else he was supposed to do. He didn't have anything to feed it and wasn't sure it would let him pet it, so he was starting to get a little restless. What did people normally do when a stray cat just adopted their lap?

The cat had started purring at some point when Shouto heard a meow coming from another part of the alley. He looked up to see another cat, this one black and a little smaller, blinking at him from between two trash cans. It only hesitated a moment before leaving it's hiding place and padding across the alley toward him.

"No." Shouto said, tensing. "No, no, no, no! I don't even know how to deal with one cat. I'm not…"

His panic was cut off by the orange cat hissing at him again, very clearly communicating that he did not have a choice in the matter and was to remain still and not piss off the thing that had taken control of his lap. The black cat curled up against his side and Shouto let his head fall back and hit the brick behind him. He couldn't even stand up to an ornery cat. No wonder he'd lost the sports festival.

It kept going on like that for the rest of the night and after the fourth cat had crawled up onto his shoulder, Shouto just resigned himself to being a cat bed for the rest of his life. It seemed a little high of a price for accidentally freezing one cat, but if he moved now there were claws everywhere just waiting to scratch him, so he was trapped. When he reached six cats, he glared at the one responsible for this whole problem, but the orange cat just blinked up at him and twitched it's torn ear smugly. Asshole.

By the time he'd reached eight cats, Shouto was finally starting to feel a little more comfortable, so when the orange cat butted against his hand, he rubbed its head and started scratching behind its ears, which was the correct thing to do judging by the purr he got. Alright, so maybe he wasn't a *total* failure, just most of one.

He smiled softly and kept scratching the cat, "You're an asshole, you know that? Trapping me here? What are you trying to accomplish? I'm not a bunk bed for all your cat friends, you know."

The cat meowed back at him, obviously pointing out that he *was* a bunk bed, just based on the number of cats he'd ended up with. Shouto glared at it, "This is your fault. You started this. You know what? Just for that, I'm going to call you EndevPurr, you deserve it."

He flinched as the cat flicked out its claws and dug them into his thigh. It wasn't enough pressure to hurt, but it was a clear enough warning to Shouto to roll his eyes and give in, "Fine. I'll shorten it to Epurr, but you and I both know what it stands for."

Epurr gave a satisfied chirp and Shouto shook his head as he scratched behind the cat's torn ear again. How had he ended up here again? Oh, right, he'd lost the sports festival and then made a weird enemy...friend...thing out of a stray cat. How was this his life?

"You must have a fire quirk."

Shouto jumped and Epurr hissed at the newcomer, who just scratched his neck and rolled his eyes as he sat down next to them. He wore a ratty black hoodie and jeans and looked like he was a few years older

than Shouto was, probably in his early twenties, and badly needed a hairbrush and moisturizer. His father would never let him leave the house looking like that, too concerned with his successor looking perfect for the cameras, but this stranger seemed more at home in these back alleys than Shouto was.

That didn't mean he was any less suspicious of him, "How do you know that?"

"The cats." the guy gestured to his collection. "Even when it's just a little chilly out, they track down anything warm and fire users can either manipulate their own temperature or just naturally run a bit hotter. Hence your little fanclub. Be careful of the orange one, though. She's a bitch."

"Oh." Shouto scratched Epurr's chin and she purred. "Yeah, a little. She might let you pet her though. Do you have a fire quirk?"

"Nah, just can't sleep and other players will try to bully me into going to sleep if I try to game in the middle of the night." The guy shrugged, there was something familiar about his voice and the way he talked, but Shouto couldn't quite place it. "Plus, it isn't *terrible* out here when most of the NPCs are gone. And I don't *pet* things. Dangerous quirk, you know?"

He raised up his hand and Shouto froze. Epurr didn't hiss this time, but she did headbutt into Shouto's hand to get him to keep petting her. Shouto forced himself to calm down and act natural, which wasn't difficult considering how many times he'd had to do the same thing around his father. He took back what he'd thought about not being a total screw-up though, because it shouldn't have taken him so long to recognize Shigaraki, considering that he'd tried to kill them all.

He was hyper-aware of how close Shigaraki was sitting. All he had to do was reach out and Shouto would be dust. Thankfully he hadn't seemed to recognize Shouto though, so the beanie was doing its job, though the darkness and the fact that the USJ had been so chaotic probably didn't hurt. And he'd thought facing off with an ornery cat was bad.

"So...fire quirk?" Shigaraki asked.

Shouto shrugged and took a deep breath. He just had to act natural until Shigaraki left, he could do that. "I don't like it, but yeah."

Shigaraki huffed, “Yeah, I get that. My quirk’s the same way. There’s good things too though. My quirk lets me destroy the things I hate and yours apparently makes you a cat magnet.”

“I’m not sure that’s a positive.” Shouto deadpanned. “I don’t like cats.”

Shigaraki laughed, “They like you.”

“I guess.” Shouto said helplessly.

“You’re a noob in this game, aren’t you?” Shigaraki asked. “Living on the streets.”

Shouto shrugged, “More of a visitor. Just got kicked out for the night.”

“Ah, you’ll probably be back then.” Shigaraki nodded. “Most people tend to avoid this alley, too many murders, but if you ever need a place to crash you should be fine as long as you don’t piss off the wrong people. Or the cats.”

Shouto swallowed at the threat, “Got it. Don’t make the cats angry.”

Shigaraki gave a raspy laugh, “Pretty much. You’re not too bad for a noob, I guess.”

They sat there in silence for a long time until the sky started getting lighter and Shouto’s legs were starting to cramp from sitting in the same position for too long. He was busy silently panicking about how he was going to find a polite way to leave when Shigaraki’s phone buzzed and he swore.

“Ugh, Sensei’s looking for me.” He stretched and stood looking down at Shouto. “See you around, noob.”

“See you around.” Shouto responded hesitantly. “Just look for the cats.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.15.2021

Discovery

Chapter Summary

Things are discovered and changes take place.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hollis
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Memes!
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More memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nedzu and Shouta verified the address one final time before walking up the stairs to the door. The house wasn't anything special. It was a medium-sized house, appropriate for the number of foster children the couple had on record, and was a bit run-down, but overall, it was exactly what Shouta had expected. Nedzu gave a few sharp raps on the door and there was the sound of someone running to the door before one of the younger kids yanked it open.

"Hello there!" Nedzu chirped happily. "We're looking for the adults of the house, can you please get them for us?"

The kid nodded and ran back into the house, passing several eavesdropping kids who instantly ducked back behind the wall as soon as they caught Shouta looking in their direction, only to peek around the corner again after a few seconds. As they waited, Shouta caught some movement further back inside the house and he almost smiled when he saw Shinso coming down the stairs. The moment he made eye-contact with the kid, however, Shinso froze. It was only a split second reaction and Shouta supposed it made sense with seeing his teachers out of context, but Shinso really should have been expecting the visit with how well he'd done at the sports festival. He waited for Shinso to come and say hello, but all he got was a small smile and a wave before the kid turned away and continued into one of the other rooms. Shouta frowned. That was odd.

It was only another few seconds later that the parents appeared,

pushing Shinso's weird behavior from his mind for the moment. The woman hid partially behind the man, who was large and grinned widely as he greeted them, "Hello! What can I do for you today?"

"My name is Nedzu, I am the principal of UA high school!" Nedzu introduced himself. "And this is Aizawa, one of the teachers there. We were hoping to have a discussion with you about one of your foster children, Shinso Hitoshi?"

Instantly, the man's face soured, "Of course. We saw the sports festival, so we know what this is about. Come on in."

Shouta and Nedzu exchanged a confused glance as they followed the couple into the house. If they had watched the sports festival and knew that Shinso was getting into teh hero course then why weren't they happy for him? Winning the sports festival like Shinso had wasn't a small accomplishment, so they should be proud of their son, but they weren't acting that way.

They were led into the living room and sat down on the couch as a couple of the kids ran out to give them some privacy. The couple sat down across from them and before Nedzu could say anything, the woman started apologizing, "We are so sorry! We had no idea that Shinso was going to take advantage of his classmates like that!"

"His behavior was unacceptable, so rest assured that he is being dealt with accordingly." The man continued. "But of course, we're willing to accept any punishment the school gives him as well. We don't know what was going through the boy's head!"

Shouta just blinked in shock, unable to think of anything to say to *that* and Nedzu's smile looked like it had just been glued onto his face as he responded, "I am afraid I'm not quite sure what you mean. Shinso won the sports festival due to his own merit."

"He didn't even give those poor kids a chance to fight back!" The woman exclaimed. "We knew things would be difficult, taking in a child with a villain's quirk, but...well, we thought he was more respectful than to lie to everyone like he did!"

"We're making him write apology letters." The man offered. "Lying about the way his quirk worked was unfair to the other students, so he'll be delivering letters explaining how it works as soon as classes start up again."

Things were clicking into place and Shouta didn't like what he was

seeing. *Letters.* The couple hadn't said they were making Shinso apologize, they were making him write letters, which were a non-verbal form of communication that wouldn't risk activating his quirk. And then, when they'd seen him earlier, Shinso hadn't said anything, just waved. How long had it been since he was able to talk at home.

"Are you telling me that you're *punishing* him for winning the sports festival?" He asked numbly.

"He didn't win fairly." The man said. "He didn't give the other kids a fair shot at fighting back. Hiding his quirk's activation was…"

"A valid strategy within the rules of the exercise." Nedzu replied, far too politely. "I'm sorry that you feel he was fighting dirty, but we do encourage our students to push every advantage they can both against villains and against each other and Shinso did very well at that. Apology letters won't be necessary."

The couple looked confused, "But…"

"Perhaps we could talk to Shinso?" Shouta interrupted. "We have a few things we'd like to discuss about his transfer into the hero course."

"But the boy was acting like a villain!" The man raised his voice. "You can't honestly look me in the eye and say that what he did was ok!"

"Shinso. Please." Nedzu said, leaving no room for argument. "Thank you."

The couple looked at each other for a long moment, then the man nodded and they both stood, "We'll go get him. Just wait here."

Shouta waited until they left before he growled softly, "What the actual fuck."

"This *is* concerning." Nedzu murmured. "But there isn't any evidence of physical abuse and the children are obviously materially well provided for..."

"Is there any way we can get him out of here?" Shouta said, keeping his voice down as he saw a few of the other kids peak around the corner. "These people aren't going to help him be a hero. Making him reveal his activation requirements? There's a reason he hid them in the first place! If all the villains knew them…"

“We can’t simply bring a case against them, but…” Nedzu’s eyes lit up. “There might be a loophole or two we can take advantage of!”

Shouta looked at him suspiciously, “What are you…”

Before he could finish his question, the couple came back into the room, Shinso in tow. The kid was looking at the ground and Shouta felt a fair amount of rage when he realized that whatever those *parents* had said to him couldn’t have been good. Shinso was dedicated and a good kid, what gave them the right to treat him like a threat just because of the way he was born?

“Ah, Shinso!” Nedzu said cheerfully, “How are you today?”

The glance toward his foster parents was so quick that Shouta might have missed it if he hadn’t been expecting it, but it still wasn’t a surprise when Shinso smiled and gave a thumbs up in reply to the question. The parents obviously didn’t allow him to talk, because if Nedzu had asked the same question at school, preferably when Shinso was around those two gremlins from the support course, he would have replied verbally.

Nedzu didn’t comment on the non-verbal response, “That’s good to hear! Well, you already know that you did very well at the sports festival, but I would like to be the first to congratulate you on being approved to transfer into the hero course!”

Shinso’s eyes widened and he seemed to forget about the other people in the room as he grinned, “Really?!”

The soft gasp from his foster mother made him flinch and look at the floor again, carefully falling back into the purposefully bored persona Shouta had seen him use a few times during the sports festival. He couldn’t let the kid stay here.

“Are you sure?” The woman finally asked. “Shinso is…”

“A dedicated student who will do well in the hero course.” Nedzu said firmly. “That being said, there are a few concerns. Due to Shinso’s...unique quirk and circumstances, we were wondering if you would be interested in Shinso taking part in a mentorship program. He would be placed under the custody of a pro-hero who would be able to keep an eye on him and make sure he becomes a *hero.”*

Shinso’s foster father looked at them suspiciously, “You would be willing to make sure the boy doesn’t get into any trouble?”

“Of course.” Nedzu nodded. “I know having a child like Shinso can be…overwhelming. He would be taken out of your custody and placed somewhere with more individual care and supervision. None of this will take place without your express approval, of course!”

Shouta saw a spark of fear pass behind Shinso’s eyes and he tried to catch his eye. He didn’t know exactly what Nedzu was trying to do either, but he’d known the rat long enough that he trusted him. Sure, what he was describing sounded more like a prison than anything else, but he had Shinso’s best interests at heart. Shouta could only trust that he knew what he was doing and hope that Shinso did the same.

“So, he wouldn’t be our foster child anymore?” The woman asked hesitantly.

“No.” Nedzu answered. “He would be placed in the custody of a pro-hero.”

“And you’d make sure he stayed on the right side of the law?” The man confirmed.

“Of course.” Nedzu’s smile was outwardly polite, but Shouta could see his annoyance coming through underneath, which was oddly comforting. “So?”

The couple whispered among themselves for a few minutes and Shouta tuned it out after the first few sentences. It was clear that they didn’t trust Shinso, and probably never would, but he still didn’t trust himself to not do something he’d regret if he had to sit there and listen to them treating him like a villain.

Finally, the couple turned back to them and the man started talking, glancing toward his wife for confirmation, “I…I think that would be for the best? When would he be leaving?”

“Oh, immediately!” Nedzu grinned widely. “We already have a hero lined up to take him in, so we’d like to move forward as soon as possible.”

Shinso was obviously trying to hide his panic, so Shouta stood and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder, “Well, kid, let’s go grab your things.”

Shinso nodded slowly as Nedzu explained the necessary paperwork. Aizawa followed the kid upstairs, grateful to get away from that room.

The room Shinso led him to was mostly bare and screamed of a kid who was used to not even having time to unpack before moving onto the next home. It only took him a few minutes to shove everything he owned into a garbage bag as Shouta stood there awkwardly, wondering if he should offer to help. Soon enough, Shinso hauled the bag over his shoulder and nodded silently before heading back downstairs.

Nedzu was already standing by the door and waiting for them when they got downstairs, “Are you ready? Perfect! Well then, let's be on our way!”

Shinso didn’t seem to have any desire to say goodby to anyone, so they just led him outside and Shouta opened the door to the backseat of the car to allow him to slide in. Then they were off and Shinso didn’t even spare his old home a backward glance. He did look curious, however, which was understandable, considering that Shouta was just as confused as he was.

He cleared his throat, “You’re allowed to talk, you know. We’re not going to punish you for asking questions.”

Shinso looked surprised, but still hesitated before saying anything, “So...where are we going?”

“Oh, that’s easy.” Nedzu chirped. “We’re going to the home of Eraserhead and Present Mic. Aizawa will be taking custody of you, after all!”

“I think maybe we have to turn it upside-down?” Izuku suggested. “Or maybe we should 3D model it and see if it looks any different?”

For the past few days, Mei and Izuku had spent every moment they could in the halls of UA, trying to figure out the tunnels. They probably would have just slept there, but both security and their parents had taken an issue with that, so they had settled for waking up early and exploring until security kicked them out around sunset. So far, they had identified a dozen different entrances, so far, but each one was protected by a unique riddle, so they hadn’t been able to get into any of them yet.

Mei chewed on the end of her pencil as she looked at the puzzle again, “Wait! What if it’s about directions! It spins, right?”

Izuku nodded and spun the map a quarter turn. He had hated it his

first week because why put a map of UA on the wall if it was incorrect? He'd gotten lost a few times trying to follow it until an upperclassman from the business course had taken pity on him and pointed out that the map itself was inaccurate. He'd written it off as an old map from before a remodel at the time, but now that he knew it as a clue to a secret entrance, it made a lot more sense.

"Hmmm…" Izuku looked at it again. "Wait, turn it rightside up again! It says *you are here* , right? But the arrow is pointing to the cafeteria, not to where we are!"

"Oh! You're right!" Mei grinned. "So should we look in the cafeteria? Maybe there's a clue there!"

"Actually, I think you were right about directions." Izuku said. "If we start at the cafeteria, what turns would we take to get to where we are now?"

Mei grabbed his hand and yanked him down the hall, "There's only one way to find out!"

Tenya Iida closed the door behind him and finally broke down. His brother was paralyzed. There was no hope of him ever regaining the use of his legs and he would have to retire as a hero, all because some villain got into his head that he should maim and murder heroes. He didn't understand how Tensei could be so nonchalant about the whole thing! Why did Tenya have to be angry enough about it for both of them.

He took off his glasses and wiped his eyes, then put them back on. There was no point in crying when he could take action. He was a hero! He was training to defeat villains! He couldn't just sit here and cry when he should be preparing to defeat Stain and make him regret ever making an enemy out of the Iidas!

"Um…Guest bedroom's down the hall." Shouta explained awkwardly. "Bathroom's on the right and we can probably get you some more clothes and stuff once you're more settled in."

Shinso nodded silently and disappeared into his new room as Shouta sighed in exhaustion and reminded himself that putting Shinso with him and Hizashi was the best option. They could pass off the change in custody as protecting an at-risk youth, and because the original foster parents had approved the transfer and given their express

approval, no one would question a pair of heroes taking protective custody until they were actually able to get a foster licence. As much as he hated uprooting the kid, Shinso deserved to live in a place where he was allowed to speak.

He glanced over to the couch, where Hizashi was giving him a knowing grin and Shouta scowled, “Don’t even say it.”

Izuku read the directions out loud as Mei turned the map, “Left, left, right, left, right, right, left!”

They both held their breath as they looked at the map, which was probably the only reason why they were able to hear the quiet click as the latch unlocked and one of tiles on the floor beneath them popped up. They shared an excited look before rushing to it and pulling it up like a trap door, then they dropped down into the small tunnel and pulled the entrance closed behind them.

“Well, Izu-kun…” Mei grinned manically in the low light. “Are you ready to explore UA?”

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 03.21.2021

Confusion

Chapter Summary

Hitoshi's official first day in the hero course!

Chapter Notes

Art!
most of this is ftwoan crossover art
JustDandy
Kappa
Unhealthily obsessed
Avroux
Haruuu
xXJoshOwoXx
Coppery Copper

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

At this point, Hitoshi had just accepted that confusion was his default emotion. Being kidnapped and practically adopted by two kids his own age who turned out to be mad scientist gremlins had thrown him for a loop, sure, but that was nothing in comparison to whatever this situation was. At least he had confirmation that he'd made it into the hero course, but going home with his teachers who may or may not be waiting for him to go off the rails was *not* what he'd had in mind when he'd woken up yesterday.

He had the sneaking suspicion that Eraserhead hadn't been planning on it either. Sure, he hid his surprise well, but Hitoshi had seen the brief flash of surprise and maybe panic that had passed over his face before he managed to hide it. He didn't know why it hurt so much that Eraserhead was scared of him. Everyone was, so this shouldn't be any different, but in the few times they'd interacted in the past, Hitoshi hadn't noticed any hesitence to talk to him, but from his obvious panic and what Nedzu and told his former foster parents, they were doing this to make sure that he didn't get tempted to switch sides. It hurt to know that, except for Mei and Izuku, UA really wasn't that different after all.

Hitoshi straightened his tie and pushed those thoughts from his mind. He could get through this. He always did. It was just a matter of fading into the background and not talking more than he had to. As long as he behaved, Eraserhead wouldn't have any reason to kick him out of his house and by extension probably the hero course as well. No pressure.

Despite the fact that he knew this was just a precautionary arrangement, it was still trippy to leave his room and see Eraserhead and Present Mic sitting at the kitchen table eating breakfast. It was like running into his teachers at the grocery store, but *worse.* Present Mic grinned as he came into the room, practically bouncing in his seat with excess energy, "Hey there little listener! How'd you sleep?"

Hitoshi shrugged and Eraserhead slapped Mic upside the head, probably to shut him up so he wouldn't encourage Hitoshi to say anything, "Don't be so loud, Zashi, the kid just woke up. Besides, it'd be a miracle if he slept at all with the way you snore."

"Hey!" Mic squawked.

Hitoshi chuckled despite himself, then froze. Laughing didn't really count for his quirk, but did his teachers know that? Would they get angry at him? He looked up hesitantly, only to see Eraserhead smiling like he'd won something and Mic shaking his head in amusement. Ok, so they were glad he'd laughed at their joke, and he wasn't going to get in trouble for laughing. Good to know.

"Do you want any breakfast?" Eraserhead asked, frowning when Hitoshi shook his head. "Are you sure? We're having omelettes, but we can make you something else if you'd like?"

Hitoshi just shook his head again. He didn't want to cause any trouble on his first day and he never really got hungry until later anyway. There was always lunch and Izuku had a stash of snacks in his room for emergencies anyway. He was fine.

Eraserhead sighed heavily, while Mic looked worried and Hitoshi had the sinking feeling he'd done something wrong, but it was too late to take back his decision, so he just adjusted his backpack and waited for them to say something else. Was he supposed to walk to school or wait to leave with them? What was the protocol when you were living with your teachers?

After another minute or two of heavy silence, Mic stood up and took his plate to the sink, "Alright, you ready to go little listener?"

Hitoshi nodded as Eraserhead stood and grabbed his keys, “Let’s go then. It’s your first day in the hero course, so it’s gonna be a long day. Your new classmates are a bunch of annoying brats, but you’re used to dealing with Powerloader’s gremlins, so it’ll be nothing new.”

Hitoshi snickered. It was always funny to see how the teachers reacted to Mei and Izuku. It was almost funnier than seeing the student’s reactions, which was also hilarious. Eraserhead had seemed to support the two during the sports festival, so maybe living here wouldn’t be *too* bad, even if they were just waiting for him to mess up and turn villain. As long as he respected Hitoshi’s friends, that was the important part.

Mic talked the entire drive to UA and Hitoshi was almost tempted to ask him a question just to get him to shut up. Eraserhead nodded along and made interested hums at all the right places, but obviously wasn’t fully listening to what Mic was saying. The weird part was that Mic seemed to know that and was totally fine with it. It was like the two had this silent agreement that Mic could talk as much as he wanted about everything under the sun and Eraserhead would just be *there.* He could see Mei and Izuku doing that too, but they would probably have to take turns as the listener, otherwise neither of them would ever shut up.

When they got to the school, Mic kissed Eraserhead on the cheek, which surprised Hitoshi even though they lived together, and left toward the general education part of the building. Hitoshi almost followed him out of habit, only to find himself being yanked back by Eraserhead’s capture weapon around his waist.

When he turned back, Eraserhead was just raising an amused eyebrow at him, “Just where do you think you’re going? You’re in the hero course now, or did you forget?”

“I…” Hitoshi slammed his mouth shut. Just because he was at UA didn’t mean he was welcome to speak. This guy was still suspicious of him.

He glanced up at Eraser hesitantly, but to his surprise, instead of getting angry, Eraserhead’s face had softened into something like pity or maybe understanding, “You know you’re always allowed to talk here, right? No one’s going to force you, of course, but neither Mic nor I are ever going to punish you for talking. You’re going to be a hero with that quirk, so it would be illogical to restrict your usage of it. Do I make myself clear?”

Hitoshi nodded again and Eraserhead just sighed and started walking toward 1A. It was a nice sentiment, but it could also be a trap. It didn't seem very hero like to bait him like that, but then again, Eraserhead was infamous for his logical ruses, so it was better to stay on the safe side for now.

Eraserhead paused for a moment when they reached the door to 1A. "By the way, you didn't ever actually write those apology letters your foster father wanted you to, did you?"

Hitoshi nodded, confused. They were tucked away in this bag, and he wasn't looking forward to delivering them, but he was glad he'd actually written them, if Eraser was asking. But then again, that also meant that he couldn't just conveniently *forget to deliver them* or anything.

"Ugh, rip them up." Eraserhead scowled and Hitoshi did a double take. "Or have Hatsume explode them or something. I don't care."

Before Hitoshi could even react to that, much less process, Eraserhead pushed open the door and walked into the classroom. Hitoshi's eyes widened as he took in the chaos happening in the class and then widened even more when everyone just *stopped* the moment they saw Eraserhead open the door.

"Good Morning brats." Eraserhead announced. "Good job on the sports festival, but don't get too cozy, your torture is just beginning. Shinso, you're in the empty seat. Let's get started."

His initial judgement of the man had definitely been correct. He was even scarier than Izuku.

"And yeah, I heard he was *totally* creeping on some of the third years over the break." Mina shuddered. "I almost wish there hadn't been an empty seat so you could have kicked him out, Shinso!"

Hitoshi wasn't quite sure how he'd ended up walking to lunch with a group of students from 1A, but as soon as class ended, Uraraka had pretty much immediately grabbed his hand and started dragging him along, most of the girls from the class falling into pace and filling the air with gossip. He was starting to relax a little more now that he wasn't around Eraser...well, Aizawa, who considering his instructions about the letters might not actually be judging him? Still, he didn't want to mess up his chances now that he was finally in the hero course, so it was better to err on the side of caution, at least around

the hero course students.

“Yeah, Mineta’s pretty bad.” Jiro laughed. “But at least...what the actual…?!”

He practically ran into Jiro’s back as she stopped suddenly in the middle of the hall. He looked to see what had shocked her and somehow wasn’t really surprised to see Mei and Izuku hanging from the ceiling, dust in their hair as they grinned at them, “Extra-Credit-Kun! You made it in!”

His classmates, with the exception of Uraraka, gaped at them and a couple looked around in confusion trying to figure out who they were talking about. Izuku took a breath to say something else, onto to sneeze violently, which wouldn’t have been nearly as bad if he’d actually been hanging onto anything. Instead he probably would have fallen out of the ceiling if Uraraka hadn’t removed his gravity in time.

“Thank Uraraka!” Izuku smiled brightly, still upside down as Mei started dragging him back up into the ceiling and Uraraka returned his gravity. “Hitoshi, you have to see this! It’s so cool!”

Hitoshi was just trying not to laugh as both Mei and Izuku reached down, grabbing one arm each and just pulled him up into the ceiling. He tried to imagine how this must look to anyone who wasn’t familiar with his kidnappers, and that just made him laugh harder.

He pulled himself up the rest of the way into the ceiling and Izuku started shaking dust from his hair as Mei poked her head back down into the hallway, “Don’t worry, we’ll return him after lunch!”

“Just make sure he’s back in time for class!” Uraraka’s voice echoed with laughter. “Have fun and don’t kill him before he can be a hero!”

Hitoshi’s shoulders shook in laughter as Mei slammed the secret panel closed, cutting off the sound of his classmates freaking out as he turned to his kidnappers, “So…? What did you want to show me?”

“We got into the tunnels!” Mei’s eyes were wide and he could see the crosshairs in her eyes zooming in and out as she looked behind him and took in every detail.

Hitoshi just chuckled, “I can see that.”

“It took so long!” Izuku rambled. “Every single door is locked with a different puzzle and we haven’t even found all of them. Most of the

doors *out* are also locked, which was kinda fun. We've been here since yesterday."

"What?" Hitoshi crawled after them. He didn't know if all the tunnels were this small, but it wasn't really a problem for Mei and Izuku since they were pretty short. "Did you even sleep?"

"Not important." Mei waved a hand dismissively. "We've been exploring! These tunnels lead *everywhere!* We can get to all the labs, even after hours, not to mention the practice grounds and the classrooms, the staff areas…"

"But that's not even the best part!" Izuku interrupted. "Obviously, not many people ever find them, so some of the tunnels are pretty dusty, but Nedzu *did* design them to be explored! There's even...oh, here we are!"

Hitoshi panicked slightly as Mei and Izuku literally just *fell* and disappeared. He moved forward more slowly and screamed when he realized that one of the floor panels was actually a hologram. He hit the floor with a small *oof* and rubbed his head as he looked around and found...a nest? A half dozen blankets were spread out across the floor and more were folded against the walls. There was a mini-fridge and a cupboard that Mei was pulling cookies out of. Izuku poked his cheek and held out a take-out container from Lunch Rush.

"Is...is this where you guys slept?" Hitoshi asked, taking the food. "I mean, more power to you, but is it comfortable?"

Izuku shrugged, "Some of the others are more so, but this one's more central and it has the fridge."

"Got it." Hitoshi nodded and took a bite of his lunch. Yeah, confusion was definitely just his life now, but honestly, he wouldn't have it any other way.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.27.2021

Please be aware that you have now read the equivalent of a full length novel. If you've been looking for an excuse to eat, hydrate, or go to bed, this is it.

Panic

Chapter Summary

Internships are on the Horizon

Chapter Notes

Art!
I love it when one of my stories inspires art in the others...
Danny Clip X
Die_Bien
Hattie X
LillyPadGirl00 X X
Grey Wolf X X X
Claire;P
Unhealthily Obsessed
Alix.nerdball
Floridian Knife Frog
Another Obsessed person
Hollis X
EevillsEevil X
Liz_Cygibi_386
Blurry X Star System
Just Dandy
PaOPaO X

Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Powerloader just looked tired as he looked at Izuku and Mei, who were standing in front of his desk, “Seriously. I don’t know what to do with you two anymore.”

Izuku shuffled his feet nervously, “Is this because of the tunnels? Because we had Nedzu’s permission and…”

“It’s not because of the tunnels.” Powerloader groaned. “Although that is an entire headache in and of itself. I don’t think I’ve ever seen Nedzu this delighted and it will live in my nightmares forever.”

Izuku and Mei shared a look. She was *used* to being called up to talk to the teacher, although admittedly that was usually because she’d blown something up, but for Izuku, getting a teacher’s attention had

never been a good thing. He knew that Powerloader *probably* wasn't actually mad at him, but he couldn't shake the feeling he'd been bad somehow, even if he couldn't remember what he'd done.

"Um, sir?" Izuku cleared his throat. "If it's not about the tunnels, what *is* it about?"

Powerloader sighed, "Internships."

"Internships?" Mei repeated.

"Internships." Powerloader droned.

"Um…" Izuku furrowed his brow. "Aren't those just for hero students?"

"Not technically." Powerloader said, pulling a file out from under a mountain of paperwork on his desk. "Support students usually intern with local companies in the afternoons during internship week, so classes still continue as normal, unlike the hero course, which cancels their classes for the week. You two, however…"

He plopped the folder down in front of them and opened it up, revealing a glossy brochure and a pile of permission forms. Mei and Izuku looked at him suspiciously before leaning over and picking up the brochure. As soon as she realized what it was for, Mei yanked it out of Izuku's hands with a gasp and he let her, too shocked to do anything.

Powerloader sighed again, "You've been invited to intern at I-island."

"So, Shinso, who are you gonna intern with?" Uraraka asked. "You got offers, right?"

Hitoshi nodded, "Yeah...I actually got quite a few. It's a little unbelievable."

"You deserve it." Yoamomo said kindly. "You were very impressive at the sports festival."

"Yeah!" Mina said. "Especially since you activate your quirk by…'

She smiled hopefully, but Hitoshi just rolled his eyes, "Nice try, Mina, but no,I'm still not telling you how my quirk works."

"Aww!" Mina pouted. "But the curiosity is killing me! You're going to

be responsible for my *death,* Hitoshi Shinso."

Hitoshi kept a completely straight face as he responded, "Then die."

"If you're really that curious, why don't you just go ask some of his old classmates?" Jiro suggested. "I'm sure *someone* in class 1H knows how Shinso's quirk works, since it was probably Midoriya's idea to hide the activation requirements."

"I already tried that!" Mina groaned and collapsed onto her desk. "But they're all too scared of the wall gremlins to say anything!"

"Yeah, that makes sense." Tsu said. "I can see those two threatening Shinso's old classmates."

"That's the best part." Hitoshi laughed. "Mei and Izuku never actually threatened them. I don't think the idea even occurred to them. They just saw my kidnappers often enough that they realized being scared was just common sense."

"Maybe that's because you call them your kidnappers." Uraraka pointed out. "And they're not *that* bad. Sure, they're a bit high energy, but.."

"They are literally the definition of mad scientists." Hitoshi deadpanned.

Everyone laughed and Hitoshi found himself smiling as well. The girls were nice and they seemed to genuinely like having him around. He got the feeling that they'd still talk to him even if they knew how his quirk worked. It was nice, especially considering his current living situation.

"So, internships?" Uraraka asked again. " I'm thinking about going with gunhead, but I don't know yet."

"I was actually looking at him too." Hitoshi said. "I've got a pretty good handle on my quirk, thanks to Izuku's training, but with a mental quirk, I don't think it's possible to have too much combat training."

"Hmm, maybe I should go with a combat hero as well…" Yaomomo interjected thoughtfully. "I was leaning towards Uwabami, simply because she looks so effortlessly confident, but some hand to hand training would be helpful. Just because I can create weapons doesn't mean I always know how to use them."

"Do it!" Mina yelled. "We need more badass female combat heroes!"

"I wanna intern somewhere stealth based, " Hagakure said. "I may as well specialize in what I'm good at, right?"

"Same here." Tsu said. "I've got an offer from Selkie, so I'll probably go there."

"Wouldn't it be awesome if we ended up at Gunhead agency together, Shindig?" Uraraka looked excited. " I wonder if he takes multiple interns.."

Hitoshi shrugged. It would be nice to have a familiar face around, but he didn't want to hold Uraraka back at all. Even after all the training he'd done, he was still a new addition to the hero course and had a lot to catch up on. He was just hoping his internship would be enough to help him close the gap.

"I don't even know what I'm supposed to bring!" Mei yelled, throwing a wrench across the room. "Am I supposed to bring all my tools or will they have tools there that we can use? Oh my goodness, I bet their tools are like, top of the line! Who am I kidding, of course they're the top of the line, it's *I-Island!"*

Hitoshi shook his head as he dodged another projectile, "I'm sure you'll be fine, Mei. You're the top invention student in the school and Izuku is the *only* analysis student. Besides, you've already impressed them."

"That's what makes it so bad, Extra-Credit-Kun!" Mei's eyes were rapidly zooming in and out as she looked around the lab, trying to decide what to pack. "They already have high expectations and what if I don't live up to him."

Izuku came up and gently put a hand on her arm, "You'll be fine, Mei-chan. They'll love both you and your babies, I know it. Going to I-Island may be a lot of pressure, but we've done high pressure before, remember? We've helped fight actual *villains,* Mei-chan, so a few high class inventors should be a piece of cake!"

Mei groaned and her shoulders slumped as the panicked energy finally started ebbing away, "Yeah, we can do this. We'll be fine. We'll be fine!"

"Why are you guys even packing anyway?" Hitoshi asked. "Internships

don't start until next week."

Izuku shrugged, "Mei-chan was nervous."

"Ah." Hitoshi nodded. "That makes sense."

"Hey!" Mei pouted. "Don't put this all on me, Izu-kun!"

Izuku just gave her a cheeky smile and shrugged, making her pout harder, before turning back to Hitoshi, "You don't have to help us pack you know. School ended two hours ago, so your family's probably wondering where you are by now."

"I'm, uh…" Hitoshi grimaced. "I'm kinda avoiding going home right now."

Izuku tilted his head in confusion, "What? Why?"

"Well, it's kinda complicated." Hitoshi explained. "I've been in the foster system for a while, which whatever, it is what it is, but when I got into the hero course, apparently Nedzu wanted the teachers to keep a closer eye on me? Probably because I'm gonna be getting more dangerous training now, I guess. Anyway, I'm living with Eraserhead and Present Mic now."

Izuku and Mei just blinked at him, processing what he said for a long moment before Izuku spoke up quietly, "What do you mean *keep an eye on you?"*

Hitoshi shrugged, "You know, keep me from going villain and stuff."

"What?!?!"

Ochako followed the directions the email had given her carefully, triple checking them when she realized that the beach park she'd been told to go to was actually a dump. Her mind whiled with questions. First of all, why would All Might insist on having a private meeting with her? Second of all, why not have that meeting on campus like a teacher normally would? And last of all, if they couldn't meet on campus, why meet at a *dump?!*

She didn't even know *where* in the dump she was supposed to meet him. For some reason, she thought he'd just be there, but now that she was here, she couldn't see him anywhere. Maybe she'd gotten the wrong address after all? She picked her way around the trash piles for

a few minutes, wondering whether she should just give up and email him an apology for missing their meeting. She *had* to be in the wrong place, right?

Suddenly, she heard a voice behind her, “I am here!”

Ochako jumped and fell on her butt, scrambling away as quickly as she could before her brain caught up that it was just All Might. She blushed and cringed as she slowly got to her feet and started brushing sand off her pants, “S-sorry, All Might. I, uh...you snuck up on me, I guess.”

“It’s alright, Young Uraraka! I’m glad to see you found the beach alright!” All Might coughed softly. “Or, well, what’s left of it anyways.”

“Speaking of…” Ochako asked hesitantly. “Why meet here, of all places. Why not meet on campus?”

All Might coughed again, “Well, um, at UA, you never know *quite* who’s listening, you know? I’m sure you’ve heard that phrase, *the walls have ears?”*

Uraraka giggled and nodded, “Or crazy support students.”

All Might nodded in relieved agreement, “Or crazy support students. Anyway, I wanted to talk to you about some things I didn't want Ch...well, some things that Powerloader’s gremlins don’t necessarily need to know. Dangerous secrets that should be kept in the hands of heroes and all that, I’m sure you understand.”

“Kinda?” Uraraka said. “But, um, no offense, but if they’re that dangerous, why are you telling me? I’m just a first year.”

“Yes.” All Might coughed again, this time spewing out a little blood. “Well, um...shit, I thought I had a little more time. I guess I shouldn’t have stopped that bus robbery after school...Um, I apologize young Uraraka, but please don’t freak out.”

Ochako was about to ask what *that* meant when all of a sudden, All Might started steaming, then deflated with a sudden *poof,* leaving only a skeletal man who honestly looked like a drug addict behind. It took all her self control to follow All Might’s orders and not freak out, but she managed it, barely...at least on the outside.

“Oh…” she said slowly. “I guess that’s one of the secrets?”

All Might, if she could even call him that in this form, nodded tiredly, “Yes, unfortunately. I was injured in a battle a few years ago and now...well, now this is what I look like. I can only hold my muscle form for a few hours at a time, and soon enough, I will lose my quirk entirely. That is why I wanted to talk to you.”

All Might looked at his hand as he clenched it into a fist, “My quirk is a sacred power that has been passed from generation to generation. I received it from my mentor, who received it from hers, and before I die, I need to pass it onto a worthy successor who can take my place as the symbol of peace and lead the world into the future bravely and selflessly.”

Uraraka’s head spun. A quirk that could be passed on from generation to generation? Was that even possible? And the next symbol of peace? Uraraka thought through her classmates, but she wasn’t sure she could think of anyone who was ready to live up to such high expectations. All of this sounded unbelievable, but since All Might was the one telling it, it must be true. Which again brought up the question of why he was telling *her,* of all people?

“And that, of course, leads us back to your question.” All Might continued. “I’m sure you’re wondering why I’m telling you all this, and the truth is that you impressed me. When you faced down Bakugo at the sports festival, you kept going even when it became clear you had no chance of winning. You pulled a bold strategy that, if you’d just had a bit more power, could have won you the match. The world needs that kind of tenacity, young lady, and that’s why I’ve chosen you as my successor. Uraraka, will you inherit my quirk and become the next symbol of peace?”

Hitoshi wasn’t sure what exactly he’d said wrong, but it must have been *something* because he was currently being dragged to the principal’s office by not one, but *two* enraged kidnappers. They hadn’t even said anything to him, or to each other, but apparently they hadn’t needed to, because it wasn’t like the two of them were dragging him in opposite directions or anything. Nope, by some unspoken signal, both Mei and Izuku had somehow decided to physically *drag* Hitoshi to Nedzu’s door before he’d even had the chance to protest, not that he was brave enough to. What the hell was even going on?!

The door opened before they had the chance to knock, but for some reason Hitoshi got the idea that they wouldn’t have knocked before

barging in anyway. Izuku finally let go of Hitoshi's arm and stormed up to Nedzu's desk, "I can't believe you!"

If Nedzu was confused, he was very good at hiding it, "Ah, hello! I was honestly expecting young Hatsume to come through the wall the next time she came, not the door, but oh well. What can I help you three with today?"

Izuku's face was red and he looked like he was about to explode, "You can explain why you thought someone needed to *keep an eye* on my friend! Hitoshi isn't dangerous! You, of all people, should know that's just discrimination and I thought you were better than that! Why did you put Hitoshi under hero custody like you're waiting for him to go off the rails or something?! What gives you the right?!"

Nedzu's eyes widened and if Hitoshi didn't know any better, he would say that the principal was *surprised* as he turned to look at him. Hitoshi immediately shuffled under his stare and felt his face growing hot as he looked at the floor. He appreciated that Izuku was apparently protective, but he couldn't help the sinking feeling that this was just going to make things worse.

"It's not that bad." He muttered. "I'm used to it, Izuku, so just drop it. It makes sense, ok? I'm fine."

"None of this is *fine,* Toshi-kun." Mei growled. "And if the rat thinks that he can get away with treating you like this, just because of a quirk, then he'd better say goodbye to *all four* of his walls. And his tail."

"Ah, I believe I understand what is happening." Nedzu said calmly, not even responding to Mei's threat as he leaned over and activated the intercom. "Aizawa, Yamada, please come to my office immediately, thank you."

If anything, that just made his kidnappers even angrier and Hitoshi flinced as Mei's grip on his arm got tighter, "If you're calling the heroes to hurt Toshi-kun…"

"I assure you that I would never do anything to hurt young Shinso." Nedzu raised his paws consolingly. "I'm afraid that there has been a rather unfortunate understanding, one that I must admit I am at least partially responsible for. I ask that you be patient for just a bit longer and that you trust all will be explained momentarily."

Izuku looked at him suspiciously, "And why should we trust you?"

Nedzu looked him in the eyes as he responded seriously, “Because Shinso is not the one we meant to lie to.”

That calmed Izuku and Mei down, at least for the moment. Hitoshi was still confused and embarrassed, but he wasn’t in trouble at least. At least, he didn’t think so, but was Nedzu implying that he *had* meant to lie to someone? And what was the lie?

They stood in tense silence for another minute or so before Aizawa and Mic walked through the door, immediately tensing up in response to the atmosphere in the room. Aizawa in particular looked like he was getting ready to fight if needed as his eyes flitted around the room, taking in every detail of the scene, “Nedzu. Shinso. What’s going on here?”

“Aizawa.” Nedzu said simply. “Would you mind explaining why you and Yamada took custody of young Shinso here?”

Aizawa huffed, “Because his old foster parents were assholes who didn’t let him talk at home and he didn’t deserve to live in a place like that. In addition to simply being a terrible environment for any growing teen, it wasn’t conducive to his training as a hero. Is that all?”

Nedzu nodded and turned back to Izuku and Mei, “I had thought the ruse was obvious, but in hindsight, I suppose we underestimated the depth and severity of young Shinso’s past treatment and how that must have affected how he would see the situation. Due to a few legal limitations, we needed the permission of his previous guardians to remove Shinso from their care, and the easiest way to get that was to play into their own fears and biases. I assure you that we never intended to harm him in any way.”

Mei looked between Nedzu, Aizawa, and Mic suspiciously, “So you didn’t take custody of him because you thought he was going to snap and turn into a villain?”

“Heavens no!” Mic yelled, losing control of his quirk and making Aizawa activate his quirk for a split second to prevent them all from going deaf. “Sorry, but there’s no way we’d ever treat the little listener like that! We were trying to get him *out* of that situation, not make it worse!”

Hitoshi didn’t know how he was supposed to feel. They didn’t hate him. They didn’t think he was just a villain in the making. They…they thought he deserved better than to be treated with suspicion and were

doing their best to protect him despite their limitations, just like Mei and Izuku were doing. He felt relieved, but also... *he was an idiot!*

“Oh…” Izuku turned red and both he and Mei looked embarrassed as the rage finally left them. “Um, sorry. I guess we overreacted a little.”

“Just a little?” Hitoshi elbowed Mei in the side, “Mei?”

“Sorry for barging into your office.” Mei grumbled.

Hitoshi raised an eyebrow, “And?”

She sighed, “And sorry for threatening to destroy your office...and other things.”

Nedzu smiled gently, “No offense taken. I am wonderfully impressed by how protective you are of young Shinso. He needs friends like you.”

Hitoshi almost smiled and he felt like he was about to pass out as all the stress finally left him, “I, uh, I think I’m ready to go home now...Is that alright?”

Aizawa and Yamada both exchanged a look before Aizawa looked him straight in the eye and *responded,* “Yeah, kid, that’s alright. Let’s get you home.”

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 04.02.2021

Expectations

Chapter Notes

Art!
Chromaggia
Hatzui X
That's so Yikes
The Cat Leader
Zanchev
xXJoshOwoXx

Memes!
X X X

dog would be ecstatic about getting. An offer that *she* would have been ecstatic about getting if she could just stop feeling like an imposter! Receiving One for All was a once in a lifetime opportunity and anyone would count themselves lucky to get offered a quirk with unimaginable power, especially from, objectively, the best hero to ever live. How was she supposed to just turn her nose up at that? She didn't want to look ungrateful or presumptuous, like she didn't need All Might's power! And he was the number one hero, so she couldn't just tell him he'd made a mistake in choosing her because he was the symbol of peace and she was just a first year hero student with no idea what she was doing! All Might didn't make mistakes and even if he did, she hadn't earned the right to call him out on them. All Might might have phrased it as a question, but at the same time, it felt like an offer she couldn't just refuse. Ochako hadn't known how to say no.

So she hadn't.

She vaguely remembered stuttering out an appropriately polite response, but everything had been happening too fast and the only thing she *could* do was fall back on being polite to try to hide the way she was panicking inside. One thing led to another and before she was really able to process what was happening, All Might had given her a piece of his hair to eat, which was oddly enough one of the least weird parts of the entire experience, and then it was done. She had All Might's quirk.

Ochako had spent every day just trying to keep her head above water. She had felt the unfamiliar power welling up in her a few times so far, but she'd shoved it down in a panic every time. She didn't deserve One for All. She shouldn't have ever accepted it, but she just hadn't known what else to do and now it was too late to take it back. Last night, she'd woken up in the middle of a panic attack and had half-drafted an email to All Might trying to convince him to take the quirk back before she'd realized that she didn't even know if that was possible and even if it was, she probably shouldn't be talking about One for All over email. She didn't know what to do.

So instead, Ochako did the only thing she could do and tried to ignore the whole thing. She'd left on her planned internship and tried to put the whole *symbol of peace* thing out of her mind thinking that maybe if she put it off for long enough, it would stop feeling like she was a liar and a fake. It hadn't worked yet, but hey, All Might had chosen her because she refused to give up, so there was always hope for tomorrow, right?

The train started slowing down and Ochako shook Shinso awake, “Hey, Shindig, it’s our stop.”

“Huh?” Shinso blinked slowly and blearily sat up. “Oh, we’re here?”

“Not quite.” Ochako giggled. “We’ve still got to walk to the agency.”

“Awesome.” Shinso stretched and stood up, grabbing his duffle as the train came to a stop. “Well, let’s get going.”

Ochako grabbed her duffle, pushing down One for All again as it tried to rear its head again, “Yeah! Let’s go be heroes!”

Edgeshot had said that, since he mostly operated at night, there was no point in Shouto showing up until the evening. Instead of telling his father that, however, Shouto had packed up like normal, gotten out of the house as soon as he could and put on a beanie so he could head to Epurr’s murder alley. Alright, maybe it wasn’t fair to call it her murder alley, considering that it was most likely Shigaraki who had done the murders, but it had a certain ring to it and Epurr hadn’t scratched him when he told her the joke, so she probably thought it was funny too.

His father would probably be furious to know that he was spending most afternoons in a grimy back alley playing space-heater to an angry cat, especially since some of those days also included the company of a guy who had quite literally tried to kill All Might, but out of all the ways he could rebel against his old man, Shouto thought this was probably one of the mildest and it was the bastard’s own fault for kicking him out in the first place. Plus, this way at least *someone* could get some good out of his fire quirk.

“Hey girl.” Shouto smiled as he bent down and Epurr immediately butted into his hand. “I brought you some food today. Do you want it?”

Epurr screamed at him like the answer should be obvious, which made Shouto laugh. Honestly, part of the reason he’d chosen Edgeshot out of all his offers was because his patrol route cut fairly close to here, which meant that if he had any free time, he could drop by and, if he didn’t, he was already familiar with a lot of the streets and shortcuts, so it wouldn’t be as anxiety inducing as going to someplace completely new. The other major reason, of course, was that Edgeshot was the number five hero, which meant that Endeavor wouldn’t be able to bully him into rescinding his offer just so that Shouto would be forced to intern with him. It was a win-win.

He opened one of the cans of cat food that he'd stashed in his bag and smiled when Epurr let him pet her while she was eating. Actually, a better way to put it was that she *made* him pet her, considering that every time he'd brought her food in the past, she wouldn't stop screaming at him until he did, but Shouto didn't mind. Honestly, it was more physical contact than he got at home, so he didn't really care if she was picky about it, and he liked to think that it was a sign that she trusted him, since he'd read that some animals didn't like to let others near them while they ate out of fear that their food would be stolen.

Shouto had probably done way too much frantic googling about cats since the first time he'd come here, which would have led to a very interesting search history if he hadn't deleted it, but he felt like he was at least a little more knowledgeable than he had been before. He at least knew that Epurr wasn't going to kill him, probably, so that was good, and he knew enough to not accidentally kill her, which was even better.

When she was done eating, Epurr spent a few minutes just kneading at his leg before hopping up onto his shoulder and starting to lick at the nape of his neck, the only place his hair wasn't completely covered by his beanie. He wasn't quite sure *why* she always did that when he came by, but she got angry if he interrupted her, and he didn't really mind, so he just let her do her thing. Eventually, she hopped back down into his lap and purred while he pet her until the sun was ready to set and it was time to go to Edgeshot's agency.

Izuku was fairly certain that he and Mei were the only two students, including the entire hero course, that had to take a plane to get to their internship. Mei spent the whole flight rambling about how the plane worked and about how all of the in-flight technology could be improved, much to the annoyance of their flight attendants, but Izuku just nodded along the whole time, making notes on any interesting quirks he found along the way to keep his brain and his analysis loose. Neither of them knew what to expect from I-island, but if Mei's fangirling was any indication, they were about to be put through the wringer and he wanted to be as prepared as possible.

The flight didn't *feel* long, but the sun was already almost setting by the time they landed. Mei was bouncing with energy as she physically pulled Izuku from the plane, barely remembering to grab their carry-ons as Izuku laughed, "Don't forget we have checked baggage too, Mei-chan."

“Oh, I could never forget that.” Mei waved away his concerns. “That’s where my babies are! It’s a shame there’s so many things they won’t allow in the plane, I could have been making so many cool babies to show all the big brain inventors this week!”

“I’m fairly certain that’s *why* they don’t allow them.” Izuku pointed out. “You *do* have a habit of blowing things up when you’re making babies, Mei-chan.”

He ignored the weird looks they got as they gathered their luggage and he couldn’t help but feel a sense of pride as he grabbed Mei’s bag off the conveyor belt and only stumbled a little. Sure, Mei immediately took it from him and hoisted it onto the floor no problem, but months ago he wouldn’t have been able to lift it at all. He was getting stronger!

It was only after they had their bags that Izuku suddenly realized that he didn’t know who was picking them up, “Umm, Mei-chan? Did Powerloader say who we were supposed to be looking for?”

“Nope!” Mei grinned and pointed to someone standing a little ways down. “But I think the sign is a pretty good replacement, don’t you think?”

Izuku looked where she was pointing and he smiled in excitement as he saw *Midoirya and Hatsume* written out in big block letters. The girl holding the sign was only a few years older than them, but from the way she was holding herself, she definitely knew her way around. Mei didn’t waste any time grabbing Izuku’s hand and dragging him toward her.

“Come on, Izu-kun!” Mei whined. “The sooner we get out of this airport the sooner we can start making babies!”

To his surprise, the girl picking them up didn’t even blush at Mei’s loud outburst, she just laughed, “Oh, you must be who I’m looking for! Uncle Might mentioned you two were a bit high energy. Now, which one of you is Hatsume and which is Midoriya?”

“I’m Midoirya. And this is Hatsume.” Izuku introduced, keeping a tight hold on Mei’s hand to keep her from leaping at their ride, which was a distinct possibility considering how her eyes were zooming in on every piece of potential tech the girl was wearing, from her glasses to her earrings. “Thank you so much for the opportunity to intern here, we’re so excited to see everything that I-island has to offer.”

“Are those tracking earrings?” Mei interrupted. “They’ve got microchips in them, but do they just track or do they do something else and…”

The girl laughed, “They’re not trackers, they’re actually a prototype I’m working on for civilian support. I’m hoping to have them be an early warning sign for panic attacks, if I can tweak them just right, and maybe even help counteract them, but maybe you’ll be able to help with that?”

Mei’s eyes widened and Izuku could feel her practically vibrating next to him, “I will take that as a challenge! Come on, Izu-kun! We’re burning daylight!”

“You work in a lab, Mei. you don’t need natural light.” Izuku shook his head as Mei pulled him along, their ride following along beside them. “And besides, you don’t even know where the car is. We didn’t even ask our ride her name!”

“Oh, I’m sorry, I guess I forgot to introduce myself.” The girl smiled kindly and skipped ahead so she could stop in front of them, holding her hand out for a handshake. “I’m Melissa Shield. Welcome to I-Island!.”

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X

The problem with a next update section is that it doesn't account for unplanned obstacles, such as me getting sick the night before I was supposed to post the next chapter. Oh well, better late than never and I hope the chapter was worth the wait!

Also, sorry for the angst, I really wanted to explore the problems that come with the inherent power disparity and social pressure that would come with the number one hero making a once in a lifetime offer to a random student. It's something I've seen talked about, but never really explored in fanfic that much.

Also, the whole Shindig thing? Originally, yeah, it was just autocorrect, but everyone loved it so much I couldn't take it out and now it has become part of the story. Congratuations.

Next Update: 04.08.2021

Relativity

Chapter Summary

Internships get going!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Claire;P
That's so Yikes

TikToks!
@fleebledotcom X
@smol.rock

Memes!
X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Interning with Gunhead was everything she hoped it would be. Ochako's whole body was sore, but she'd managed to throw Shinso just as often as he'd thrown her and even managed to hold her own against some of the other interns as well. The only downside was the One for All had been much more active now that she was in a combat situation for some reason, but she was getting pretty good at controlling it, so it wasn't a problem. Overall, she was satisfied, exhausted and ready to go to sleep.

After taking a shower, she dried her hair and went to the shared kitchen to get herself a cup of tea. She was so tired that she didn't even register Shinso sitting at the table until he spoke up, "Alright, you've been off all day. What's up?"

"Huh?" Ochako looked up and smiled. "Oh...I'm just tired, I guess."

Shinso raised an eyebrow, "I am the king of insomnia, I know that's bullshit."

Ochako sighed, "I...I guess I'm just feeling insecure? I mean, I just...are you gonna judge me if I say something kinda bad?"

"Only if it makes you a villain." Shinso deadpanned. "In which case, I will not hesitate to hand you over to the police, or worse, to Izuku and

Mei."

Ochako laughed tiredly and slumped down in the chair beside him, "it doesn't make me a villain...just a bad person, i'm pretty sure."

"Alright?" Shinso looked at her oddly. "I shouldn't be recording this for posterity, right? Cinnamon roll admits to being a murderer would *definitely* be a viral headline."

Ochako shoved him and he laughed, "Alright, but seriously, I'm not gonna judge you. What's on your mind?"

"I…" Ochako screwed her eyes shut and just spewed the word out as fast as she could to get it over with, "I only became a hero for the money!"

When Shinso didn't respond after a long moment, Ochako slowly peaked her eyes open, just to see him staring at her, looking...neutral. Of all the times when he just *had* to decide to confuse her! She was so angry that she almost lost her grip on One for All, but managed to reign it at the last minute.

"Well?" She huffed. "Aren't you gonna say anything?"

"My primary motivation is spite, Uraraka." Shinso rolled his eyes. "I am literally the worst person on earth to be able to judge your heroic motivations."

"Wait..what?" Ochako looked at him in shock. "Your motivation is *spite?!"*

Shinso shrugged, "Pretty much. Well, that and pettiness."

"Huh…" She sat back. "Seriously?

"Yep." He said. "Turns out, after enough times of being told I'll be a villain, I wanted to prove everyone wrong."

"Oh." Ochako nodded. "I guess that makes sense. I mean, it's still better than just wanting to be rich."

"Debatable." Shinso grinned. "But if you're feeling insecure, you should talk to Mei-chan. She's an inventor because she's insane, obviously, but she's also planning on owning a company and being filthy rich. I don't know, it seems to work for her, so why not for you, right?"

“Yeah, that sounds like a good idea.” Ochako took a sip of her tea and felt One for All welling up inside her for a split second before she instinctively pushed it down again. “I’ll talk to her when we get back.”

Izuku grinned at Mei’s reactions to everything as Melissa gave them a tour around the island. He didn’t think her eyes ever stayed still, zooming in on every detail she could find as they both nerded out and asked questions about everything. There were so many cool quirks and even more cool tech on display everywhere and by the time they reached the building Melissa’s dad worked in, Mei had already filled half a notebook just with ideas for inventions. It was awesome.

The security on I-Island was especially impressive. To get to Dr. Shield’s office, they had to pass through two layers of security at the building, and then there was a biometric lock and a keycard entry to get to his private lab. He was immersed in a project, but looked up when he heard them come in.

“Aw, Melissa, right on time!” Dr. Shield grinned. “And these must be Powerloader’s gremlin’s that I’ve heard so much about.”

“All good things…?” Izuku began but Mei cut him off.

“Don’t care, are those temperature regulators?” Her eyes were wide as she ran up to the device he had been working on. “Wait, are you just using water vapor?”

“I see that none of the stories about your eagerness to invent were exaggerated.” Dr. Shield laughed, “And yes. Sometimes the best solutions are actually the simplest, it’s just our job to make them usable and convenient.”

Mei looked at the device from every angle and Izuku could see her quirk working overtime as she took in every angle before looking the doctor for permission. When he nodded, she picked up the device and started fiddling with it, “You might want to move the capacitor over here. It’s a little too far from the water tank to be effective.”

Dr. Shield smiled, “Good work. You pass.”

Mei didn’t even look up as she kept fiddling with the device, “Pass?”

“It’s a test that Dad gives newcomers.” Melissa explained. “Let them handle an old invention and see if they can point out what’s wrong with it.”

“Old invention?” Mei put the device back on the table. “That means there’s new, improved versions of this baby! Where are they? Can I see them?”

“They’re all around you.” Dr. Shield gestured widely to the whole room. “I designed the entire climate control system for this building and most of the other buildings on this island. Never greenlight an invention you’re not willing to use yourself, right?”

“Right!” Mei grinned. “So! What’s the plan? I can't wait to start making babies with all these fun toys! Are we gonna be building robots? Networking? What are we doing?”

“A little bit of all of it, honestly.” Dr. Shield said. “It’s getting late, so tonight, we’ll just let you get familiar with the lab where you’ll be spending most of your time and then tomorrow, we’d like you each to choose a project to work on this week. We’ll help you out with design and troubleshooting and basically workshop it all together. Does that sound good?”

Mei grabbed Izuku’s hand and started pulling him from the room, “Let’s go Izu-kun! We’re wasting baby-making time.”

“But Mei-chan!” Izuku yelled at her as the Shields laughed behind them. “You don’t even know where we’re going!”

Tenya turned down his covers and resisted the urge to beat up the pillow he’d been provided by Manuel’s agency. Half a day in Hosu and he hadn’t seen any sign of the hero killer. He couldn’t have moved on to another city, not with only one victim here, so he had to be around and Tenya *would* find him. He took a deep breath. He just had to be patient. Stain was a master at laying low, so it was understandable that he was still hiding in the shadows. He had all week to find him, so he just had to be patient.

Ochako had woken up refreshed and exhilarated, ready for another day of sparring and maybe even a patrol or two if they were lucky. The worries and insecurities were still there, obviously, as was One for All, but she was able to let all of that fade into the background as she focused on everything she was here to learn.

Most of the other interns were already there when she skipped into the kitchen, “Good Morning!”

“Good morning Uraraka!” Shinso grinned. “How’d you sleep?”

“Like someone knocked me out.” Ochako answered. “It was amazing!”

“Well, I’m glad you’re finally here to make us breakfast.” One of the other interns laughed. “I mean, the woman’s place is in the kitchen, so I don’t know what took you so long!”

Ochako stopped and stared at him, as did the other interns. Shinso gave the kid a long, disappointed look before sighing, “Would you care to repeat that?”

“Come on, guys, it’s a joke!” The kid rolled his eyes. “You know, cause she’s the only girl! It’s not like I actually expect her to make breakfast for all of us, though I wouldn’t *complain* if…”

“Yeah, that’s enough.” Shinso took a sip of his coffee as the kid’s body went slack under his control. “MIsogyny isn’t a funny joke, and Uraraka has every right to slap you for that, but let’s save her the effort, yeah? Slap yourself in the face and then wake up.”

There was a slap and a chorus of laughter from the rest of the watching interns as the kid woke up and started stuttering out an apology. Ochako caught Shinso smiling, even though he tried to hide it by taking another sip of coffee. She shook her head and rolled her eyes at him, but he just grinned wider and took another sip of coffee.

She still couldn’t believe that he was becoming a hero out of spite, but from what she knew of him, it made sense and honestly, maybe part of the reason he was such a strong hero was because he was constantly having to stand up for himself and do things his own way. It was admirable and he made it work, despite how it might sound to someone who didn’t know him. Ochako didn’t know if she could do the same, she still felt really guilty about wanting to be a hero just for money, but maybe if she talked to Mei about it, she might be able to give it a chance, at least. Ochako still wasn’t sure if Shinso was telling the truth about Mei being motivated by money too, but if he was, then at least maybe she’d know she wasn’t alone.

She let her insecurities fade into the background as Gunhead led them through warm-ups and ordered them to spar. Ochako grinned at Shinso and he looked bored, but at this point, she was about 75% sure that meant he was actually taking her seriously. She charged first, going through the movements that Gunhead had taught them yesterday and forcing Shinso to take a step back before he was able to

move to counter her.

She still felt like a fake, but the repetitive movement and action helped. The trade-off, of course, was that One for All seemed to wake up as soon as she was in any sort of combat situation, but she was confident that she could make it stay where she wanted it to. She launched a punch at Shinso and was unsurprised when he sidestepped her and grabbed her arms. She felt One for All well up in her as he followed through with the move and started forcing her to the floor, but she pushed it away. Maybe after she'd talked to Mei, she'd be able to...

Her eyes widened as she *felt One for All push back.* She tried to stamp down on the power like she had been doing for days now, but this time, the power was like a tsunami and whatever control she'd assumed she had over it was washed away as she felt gravity *shift.*

David Shield tinkered away in his private lab, working on an actual project this time. He had been impressed that the Hastume girl didn't even need prompting to tell him what was wrong with the invention, and he was excited to see what she would choose for her project this week. Nedzu had warned him that Midoriya would seem quiet in comparison, but that he was just as smart and observant as Hatsume was, if not even moreso, so they should give him a quirk or a computer program to work on rather than discounting him. David was sure the boy would get along well with their analysts, so he wasn't too concerned. If *Nedzu* said the boy was smart, David wasn't stupid enough to think he was anything less than a genius.

Suddenly, there was a crash and David jumped to his feet to see a young girl in what *looked* to be a hero costume steadying herself against the table. She looked up at him with wide eyes for a moment, and he only briefly noticed that she looked both green and absolutely exhausted before she stumbled quickly toward the nearest trashcan and started puking her guts out.

He was torn about whether he should comfort her or call security and he ended up just staring at her in shock as she hunched over and grabbed her stomach. How had she gotten in?! She felt vaguely familiar, but then again, she was also a teenage girl that looked like every other teenage girl he'd ever seen, so he didn't trust that enough for it to do any good, especially since she had somehow gotten into his *private office!* There were two layers of security just outside the door, and then she would have had to bypass even more security to

enter the building and that's not even counting getting onto the island and yet he was fairly certain that the only teenagers authorized to get on the island this week were his interns, which considering that he didn't even know who this girl was, meant that there was something really wrong with their security.

After a minute, the girl finally stopped puking and she looked up at him, her voice scratchy and barely there from exhaustion, "That…that wasn't supposed to happen."

He lunged forward just in time to keep the poor girl from slamming her head against the floor as she passed out. Questions whirled in his brain as he pulled out his phone. Who was she? How had she gotten here? What *was* supposed to happen?

The line only rang twice before someone picked up and David finally managed to pull his gaze away from her and look around the room, "Yes, Island security? We have a level seven security risk. Put the island on lockdown."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.14.2021

Missing

Chapter Summary

The search for Uraraka begins!

Chapter Notes

Art!
HurricaneFox
D4rkCh13f73n
Phoenix Ablaze X
claire;P X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“What do you mean she *disappeared?!”* Shouta was about to tear his hair out. “Shinso, she doesn’t have an invisibility quirk or anything! She can’t just disappear!”

“Well, I don’t know what to tell you, because one minute, I had her in a capture hold and the next thing I know, I was holding air!” Shinso sounded like he was freaking out, which was perfectly understandable, considering the circumstances. “She just popped out of existence with zero warning! We’ve torn the entire agency apart and we still can’t find her!”

“O-ok.” Shouta took a deep breath. “Ok. Uraraka’s missing. We can deal with this. Gunhead’s already on the phone with Nedzu, correct?”

“Yeah.” Shinso almost sounded like he was about to cry. “You-you’ll find her, right?”

Shouta swallowed, “We’ll certainly try.”

He hung up and rubbed his temples. Of all the things he’d expected to deal with on internships, a missing student wasn’t one of them. Noise complaints, behavior recommendations, maybe even a villain attack, that was all within the realm of possibility, but a student going missing? It was every teacher’s worst nightmare and to make it even

worse, they had zero leads because she'd gone missing from a secure hero agency in full view of a pro-hero and a half-dozen other interns and no one had seen anything. He didn't even know where to start.

His phone rang again and he picked it up without looking, "Shinso, if this is about Uraraka, it hasn't been long enough for us to find anything yet."

"Well, this *is* about Uraraka." Nedzu's voice sounded grim. "But I believe there is one lead you need to be informed of."

Izuku hopped up on the desk next to Mei, who was currently welding something or another, "Wasn't Dr. Shield supposed to be here already?"

"Who cares?" Mei shrugged. "If he needed to unlock the lab, that'd be a different story, but if we're just picking a project to work with anyway, then it doesn't really matter when he shows up."

"I guess…" Izuku said slowly, going back to his laptop. "I've been thinking about what I want to do and I'm not sure whether I want to do some sort of mapping software or maybe something to help with those earrings Melissa was wearing. Having an early warning sign for panic attacks sounds like a really useful technology. What are you working on?"

"Right now?" Mei tightened one last screw and pushed her newest baby to the side. "Nothing. But that was basically a portable artificial sun. I got the idea from that bird boy in Shinso's new class. There might be all sorts of other quirks sensitive to light!"

"Cool!" Izuku grinned and got out his notebook, "That would be really useful for a lot of heroes! Do you think there's an advantage to having it spherical or would it work better as a flashlight? What about…?'

He was cut off by his phone ringing. He looked at Mei to see if she knew who was calling, but she just shrugged and started taking her new invention apart, so Izuku just picked it up, "Hello?"

"Um, Izuku?" Hitoshi sounded panicked on the other end of the phone and Izuku immediately put down his notebook and waved Mei over. "Uh, you've got that whole *man in chair* thing going on, so you know how to keep secrets, right?"

"Uh, yeah?" Izuku put the phone on speaker as Mei came to stand

beside him. “You’re on speaker with Mei, by the way. What’s wrong?”

“Well, uh…” Hitoshi’s voice became a little softer. “I, uh, I probably shouldn’t be telling you this, because it would be really bad if the media found out right now, so...but, uh, I know that you know a lot about quirks and thought maybe you’d have come across this one or something like it, I just don’t know what to…”

“Take a deep breath, Extra-Credit-Kun.” Mei instructed. “We’re right here and the media are boring, so we’re not gonna tell them and you *know* we can keep a secret, otherwise Izu-kun would probably be dead, so let’s see if we can help.”

Izuku nodded in agreement, “Take your time.”

“Well, um…” Hitoshi groaned. “You know how I’m interning at the same place as Uraraka, right?”

Izuku and Mei exchanged a confused glance, “Yeah, why?”

“We can’t find her.”

Instantly, Izuku and Mei both sat up ram-rod straight,“What?!”

On the other end of the phone, Hitoshi sighed, “She just disappeared in the middle of a spar. One minute I had her in a hold and the next, she’s just...nowhere.”

Izuku ran to the nearest computer, “And there wasn’t any purple mist, right? That’s what happened at the USJ, so try to remember.”

“Um, no?” Hitoshi took a deep breath. “She was just *gone*... wait, um, I might have seen a little bit of some sort of greenish glow? Or maybe it was pink? That might have been a trick of the light though, and there *definitely* wasn’t a purple mist or anything. Does that sound like any quirk you’ve come across?”

“No.” Izuku frowned and typed a few things into his search. “And from what I can see, it’s not on the quirk registry either. Most warp quirks have some visual indication that they’re being activated and if she were attacked by a villain, you would have seen that.”

“We hadn’t even left the agency!” Hitoshi insisted. “There *were* no villains!”

Izuku sighed, “I’m sorry we couldn’t help more. We’ll keep thinking

and get back to you if we come up with anything."

"Thanks." Hitoshi sighed. "I mean, Aizawa and Nedzu are already working on it too, so hopefully we'll find her soon."

"Let us know." Mei said. "Gravity-chan is way too nice to just disappear off the face of the earth."

"Will do." Hitoshi said. "Thanks, guys."

"Yeah." Izuku hung up and looked at Mei. "I wish there was something more we could do."

"What *can* we do, Izu-kun?" Mei whined. "We're on a floating island hours away from Japan!"

"I guess…" Izuku bit his lip. "Well, back to work?"

Mei nodded and picked up her screwdriver grimly, "Back to work."

Shouta figured he should be getting used to getting angry on behalf of his students by this point, "So you're telling me that you not only gave my student an extra quirk without informing me, but that this impossible miracle quirk has painted a target on her back a mile wide because it comes with a nemesis that runs the goddamn *league of villains!* Oh, and considering that she disappeared into thin air, they're probably the ones who took her, especially since you didn't even give her any extra security after handing her a giant *I Am Here* sign. Am I missing anything, All Might?"

All Might cleared his throat awkwardly, "Um…well, I had not anticipated them finding her this soon."

Shouta glared at him, "Well, they did, so what now?"

"Now, we do everything in our power to find her." Nedzu said calmly, a cup of long cold tea on the desk beside him. "What's done is done, Aizawa. Uraraka is gone and dwelling on the past and what should or should not have been done will not help us get her back."

"My only issue is that no one present saw any signs of Kurogiri." Tsukauchi said. "Even when we asked specifically about purple mist, everyone present said that they didn't see anything like that and none of them were lying."

"So do we think the league got their hands on another warp quirk?"

All Might asked. “With All for One at the helm, it *is* a possibility.”

“There’s also the possibility that she wasn’t taken by the league at all.” Tsukauchi pointed out.

“We can’t afford to get our hopes up for that.” Shouta said. “Out of all the possibilities we’ve considered, the most likely is that Uraraka was kidnapped by the league because *this* blond oaf decided to give them an incentive to do so.”

All Might sighed, “I know.”

Shouta noticed that Nedzu had been suspiciously silent and found him staring grimmly at his screen. He wasn’t sure how this situation *could* get worse, but he had the sinking suspicion that he was about to find out, “Nedzu. What’s wrong?”

“I just received an email from I-Island’s security team, where Midoriya and Hatsume are interning.” Nedzu turned to stare at them. “There was a security breach. The entire island is now in lockdown.”

After two hours of waiting in the lab and working on various projects, Izuku decided it was high time to go find out what was going on, if only because he was getting restless just sitting at a computer screen when he knew one of his friends had gone missing, so he left Mei working in the lab and started trying to find Dr. Shield. So far, he’d just been wandering the halls but the few people he’d seen had looked worried for some reason and had been too busy to talk to him. Eventually, he’d found someone who was able to point him toward Melissa’s room, so right now, he was hoping she’d be able to either take him to her dad or at least tell him why no one had even peaked their head in on them all morning.

He was just a few halls down from where he’d been told to go when he caught sight of Melissa and to make it better, her dad was walking beside her. Izuku waved wildly and started running toward them, “Hey! Melissa! Dr. Shield!”

“Oh, Midoriya!” Dr. Shield’s shoulders were slumped and he looked much more tired than he had when Izuku had seen him last night. “Sorry I never showed up this morning. I should have sent one of the other inventors in my place, but we’ve all been working overtime with...well, everything. The current situation has thrown all of us for a loop.”

“But what *is* the current situation?” Izuku asked. “Because if there is one, no one’s told us anything about it.”

“The island is currently in lockdown.” Melissa explained. “I was just on my way to let you know. We had an intruder come into Dad’s lab a few hours ago and until we’re sure how she got in, no one’s allowed on or off the island and communication is limited as well. It’s…well, it’s kinda a mess right now, but if it helps keep everyone here safe, then it’s worth it, right?”

Izuku nodded, “Right. Did they get through by hacking or was it some kind of quirk? I know you probably have a lot better analysts and programmers and everyone here, but if there’s anything I can do to help…”

Dr. Shield shared a look with Melissa before he turned to Izuku, “Honestly, we have no idea. It could be a quirk or it could be some tech we’ve never seen before. She just popped into existence right in front of me, no warning, no indication that anything or *anyone* would be arriving. Honestly, our scientists would be absolutely ecstatic about having a mystery to solve if it weren’t such a threat to the safety of the island.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah I can see why that…wait, did you say just just popped into existence?”

Melissa nodded, “Dad was the only one there, but when we played it back on the cameras, one minute the room was empty, the next she was stumbling into the table and puking her guts out into the nearest trash can before she passed out. We’ve given her medical attention, but so far, nobody knows who she is or how she got into his lab.”

Dr. Shield groaned, “Our only lead is that she was wearing what *looked* to be a hero uniform at the time. We’re waiting to hear back from the company that produced it, but it doesn’t match any licensed heroes.”

“Because she doesn’t have a hero license yet.” Izuku muttered.

Dr. Shield stopped, “What?”

Izuku’s mind was racing. If his suspicions were correct then how in the world had Uraraka gotten all the way to I-island in just a couple of hours? It had taken him and Mei over three hours to fly here and he didn’t even know exactly where *here* was! Still, as impossible as it sounded, Shinso had described her disappearance in the same way

that Dr. Shield had described the intruder's entrance: here one moment, gone the next. And the after effects of Uraraka's quirk would explain the extreme nausea and vomiting when she'd arrived.

"Was there a sort of weird greenish-pink glow?" Izuku asked finally. "It would have been really faint, almost to the point where you'd think it was a trick of the light?"

"I…" Dr. Shield looked at Melissa, who nodded.

"When I was watching the video, I thought it was just a lens flare." She explained. "It faded pretty much as soon as she appeared though, so it only lasted a second or two."

"Why?" Dr. Shield asked. "Do you know what's going on?"

"Oh, I don't have a *clue."* Izuku answered. "But I'd like to see her, if possible. I think I might know who she is."

Ochako was exhausted. She didn't think she'd ever felt this tired and gross in her entire life, but even with all that, there was still too much energy vibrating inside her and she kept her eyes screwed shut, hoping that if she could just keep it all in, then maybe it would go away and she'd be able to fall asleep again. She really hoped that the last thing she remembered was actually a weird dream, because if it wasn't then she didn't know where she was on top of everything else, but if she just kept her eyes shut and pretended to be asleep, then she could just pretend she was safe in Gunhead's agency and wouldn't ever have to know the difference.

A door opened and she heard a few people walk into the room before an unfamiliar voice started speaking, "She seems to be suffering from quirk exhaustion, but since we're not sure what her quirk *is,* then there's no way of knowing whether that's from coming here or if it's from whatever she was doing before."

"Hmm. Well, this *is* interesting." This voice was familiar and Ochako's eyes shot open. The room spun as she sat up too quickly, but she was too relieved to care. Midoriya smiled at her, "Hey there, Uraraka. You're not supposed to be here."

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 04.26.2021

Wisp

Chapter Summary

Uraraka can't stay still.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for all the weirdness lately!

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ochako looked at Midoriya for a long moment, then promptly burst into tears, “Oh thank goodness. I...please tell you know what’s going on!”

“Umm…” Midoriya gave her a sheepish smile as he sat down on the bed beside her. “Not yet, but we’re gonna figure it out together, ok! We can do this!”

Ochako took a deep breath and wiped her eyes, “Yeah! We can do this! What do you need to know?”

Midoriya grabbed a notebook out of his pocket and opened it to a fresh page, “Alright, so first of all, do you know where you are?”

“Well, you’re interning on I-Island, so…” Ochako thought for a moment, “well, either I’m on I-Island somehow, or you came back early.”

Midoriya laughed, “It’s the first one. Do you know how you got here? Was there a villain involved?”

“No. I was at Gunhead’s agency, so there wasn’t a villain.” Ochako wracked her brain. “One minute I was sparring with Shinso and…”

She felt gravity shift again, but not as intensely as it had last time and she was still in the hospital when it righted itself just in time for her to throw up again. Thankfully, the nurses had had the foresight to put a tub beside the bed and Midoriya just tossed his notebook out of the splash zone and rubbed her back until she was finished.

“Ugh.” Ochako wiped her mouth. “I’m sorry, that’s gross.”

“Well, you are suffering from quirk exhaustion.” Midoriya reminded her. “Which...well, what else do you remember?”

“Um...well, it was kinda like what happened just now.” Ochako grimaced. “I was completely fine this morning, but then I got really dizzy and all of a sudden I was someplace else.”

“Hmm.” Izuku made a note of something. “Any other details? What you were trying to do during the spar, what you were thinking about, ect?”

Ochako thought for a moment, “I mean, in the spar, I was just trying to keep Shinso from pinning me, but I was also thinking about how once internships were over, I needed to talk to Mei about…”

Izuku jerked back in surprise as Uraraka just...disappeared into thin air. Sure, there were slight traces of some sort of light, but mostly, she simply blinked out of existence, exactly like Shinso had described. It was a weird sight and he almost didn’t believe his eyes, but at least now he could form some theories.

“Dr. Shield.” He looked up from his notebook. “You wouldn’t happen to have any equipment for measuring gravitational fields on this island, would you?”

The moment Ochacko felt gravity shift again, she tensed. Even though she’d half been expecting it this time, the bed disappearing out from under her was still a shock and she didn’t have nearly enough time to get her feet under her before she was falling hard on the floor.

“Seriously? Which of you beautiful babies decided to fall off the…” Mei circled the table and she stopped and blinked when she saw Ochako on the floor, the gesture looking even more strange with the way her eyes were magnified underneath her goggles. “Oh, hi gravity girl! I didn’t see you come in! You’re supposed to be missing, so how did you get all the way out here?”

Ochako groaned and flopped down on the floor, “Yeah, that’s what I’d like to know.”

Mei hummed, “Well, as long as you’re here, you may as well earn your keep! I need an extra set of hands.”

Ochako nodded and groaned as she stood up. She still felt unbearably nauseous, but she didn't feel like she was going to lose what was left of her breakfast at any moment, so that was a positive. Maybe it was because she didn't go as far this time? But, of course, that brought up the question of why she'd gone at all and Ochako wasn't sure she really wanted the answer to that.

Mei handed her what looked like the handle of a lightsaber, "Just hold that part steady, alright?"

Ochako nodded again and let Mei do her thing, but her thoughts started to spiral again and she bit her lip nervously as she remembered the reason why she'd been thinking about Mei in the first place, "Um, Hatsume? Do you mind if I ask you something?"

"Sure, but Hatsume's too formal!" Mei tightened another screw. "I thought I told you to call me Mei!"

Ochako half-smiled, "Heh, yeah. Um...why did you choose to go into support?"

Mei grinned, "It's fun! I get to make so many wonderful babies!"

Ochako frowned, "And, uh, is that why you want to have your own company too?"

"Eh, I could work for somebody else and still make cool stuff." Mei stuck out her tongue in disgust. "But if I'm gonna make these babies, I want everybody to know who made them! It's branding! One day, I'm gonna be famous for all these beautiful babies, just you wait and see!"

"But…" Ochako struggled to figure out a polite way to phrase it before realizing that Mei probably didn't care. "Um, isn't that kinda selfish."

"Yeah." Mei tightened something else on her device. "So?"

Ochako stared at her, "So?"

Mei cackled, "A lot of people have this really stupid idea that being selfish is bad, just like they think failure is bad, but failure is how you make wonderful babies! If being selfish helps motivate me to be a better inventor, then why in the world wouldn't I do that?!"

"Huh," Ochako blinked a few times, feeling like the world had shifted underneath her in a way that wasn't literal. "I guess I'd never thought of it like that."

“That’s because too many people limit themselves and don’t give into the best ideas!” Mei declared, tightening one final screw and taking the device from Ochako. “If something isn’t helping, throw it out! And if something is helping, then make it a part of the design!”

Ochako smiled as Mei turned on her device, only to frown when nothing happened. Mei, however, just shrugged and threw the device over her shoulder, “The original design was better. Back to the drawing board!”

Ochako laughed, “If at first you don’t succeed…”

“Then use that failure to fuel your next success!” Mei returned with a wide grin. “Hand me that wrench. Oh, and I’m glad you’re alright, by the way. Sorry I forgot to mention that. Shinso said you just went *poof!* ”

Ochako groaned, “I’m dunno. Before I came to talk to you, I was hoping that Midoriya could…”

The gravity shifted again and Ochako had to resist the urge to scream in frustration as she found herself on a random street, *somewhere.* She was just so done with the whole thing. She felt emotionally and physically exhausted and she just wanted to *stay still for a little while!* Was that really too much to ask?!

At least she was finally getting used to the sensation. Ochako still didn’t know what was going on, but she was almost certain at this point that it was One for All’s fault, even if she couldn’t pinpoint *how.* Alright, so maybe trying to push all that power down until it blew up hadn’t been the best idea, because her new quirk obviously wasn’t letting her repress it anymore, considering she could potentially end up halfway across the world with just a stray thought.

“Alright, how did I do this last time?” Ochako grumbled. “I was just thinking about Midoriya and…”

Gravity shifted and Ochako felt a brief sense of pride until she looked around at her new location and Midoirya was nowhere to be seen. “You’ve got to be kidding me!”

Izuku popped his head into the lab, “Hey, uh, kind of a weird question, but have you seen Uraraka?”

Mei looked up from her current project, “She just popped out.”

“Of course.” Izuku groaned, “Did she give any clue of where she was going?”

“Nope!” Mei shrugged, then thought for a minute. “But I think she was talking about you when she disappeared.”

“That...alright that makes sense.” Izuku scribbled a few things down in his notebook. “Her quirk must be using people to anchor her when she warps, but the only question is which people...and of course where she ended up this time.”

“If you were her anchor point, Izu-kun,” Mei pointed out, “then shouldn’t she be with you?”

“You’d think so, but no.” Izuku jumped up to sit on the table. “Her quirk uses gravity, but that’s such a widespread force that she’s probably only able to approximate her target, at least right now.”

Mei hummed, “I didn’t even know she could teleport.”

“Neither did she.” Izuku shook his head in amusement. “I’m still trying to figure out why, but it’s like her quirk got more powerful overnight and now she’s dealing with a new manifestation of it. It’s really cool, but she hasn’t had time to develop the ability, so she doesn’t have any way to stop herself from warping.”

“Or any way to predict where she’ll end up.” Mei finished. She pushed her project to the side and started grabbing more materials. “Well, I can help with one of those.”

Dr. Shield smiled and lifted the tarp, “It’s been a while since I had an excuse to dust off this old baby.”

Melissa rolled her eyes, “You realize you could take it out for a spin at any time, right? You’re just old and boring.”

“Is that the car you and All Might used during his study abroad?!” Izuku’s eyes were wide as he dissolved into a muttering storm of facts. “The technology was state of the art at the time and still holds up under today’s standards. The engine alone is…”

“Come on, Izu-kun, you can nerd out in the car.” Mei grabbed him by the collar and hauled him into the back seat. The device in her hand was only mostly finished, but Dr. Shield had been tracking the gravitational fields around the island and Uraraka’s warps were

becoming more frequent, so they needed to find her before she accidentally ended up in the water or something.

“Alright, Midoriya! Your turn to navigate!” Melissa said, strapping herself into the passenger seat as Dr. Shield started the car. “You connected your laptop to the gravity sensors, right?”

“Yep!” Izuku said. “I’m probably going to have to write a program to really *track* her, but for now these readings will at least tell us when she moves and get us in the general ballpark of where she is…oh, she moved again. Head west!”

Ochako sighed and tried not to think of anything at all as she made her way down the streets, too tired to pay attention to the weird looks she was getting for wearing a full hospital gown in the middle of the city. At least it wasn’t one of the ones that was open in the back, but honestly, at this point she didn’t care. Maybe if she just didn’t *think* she wouldn’t find herself suddenly halfway across the city with no way of knowing where she’d end up.

She passed a fast food place and only hesitated for a moment before muttering, “Screw it.”

An electronic bell chimed as she pushed open the door and the look on the poor cashier’s face when he saw her was way more funny than it had the right to be, but Ochako was too tired to laugh or even really care as she walked up to the counter, “Hey, do you guys sell ginger ale?”

“Um…yes?” He looked her up and down, and Ochako knew she should be embarrassed, but she just found herself half wondering whether they’d turn her away for violating a no shoes, no shirt, no service policy or whether they’d just roll with it. The cashier hesitated for another moment before meeting her eyes again. “I, uh, I’m assuming you don’t have any money with you?”

“She warped again!” Izuku yelled. “Ooh, she’s closer this time!”

“Where to next, then?” Dr. Shield stopped the car, ready to double back if they needed to. “Where is she?”

“She’s…” Izuku looked at the screen and his eyes widened. “She’s two streets over!”

“Great! We can cut through that alley!” Mei grabbed his hand and Izuku had just enough presence of mind to set down his laptop before she was pulling him from the car and running toward the alley.

“Wait!” Melissa called. “Shouldn’t we…”

“Sorry, we’ll meet you there!” Izuku yelled back. It was only a few seconds before they were running out onto the next street, which was more crowded than the one they’d just come from, “Excuse me! Has anyone seen a girl in a hospital gown?”

Ochako sipped on her soda and took a few deep breaths as she ignored the stares of the other patrons. She’d wasn’t nearly as nauseous as she’d been when she’d first gotten to I-Island, and she could feel herself steadily regaining energy especially with the way that One for All was buzzing just underneath her skin, but she still wasn’t *used* to it. It would have been nice if One for All came with an off switch because the way things were going, she would be having to shower in a bathing suit for the foreseeable future.

She slumped further down in the hard plastic seat and took another sip, only partially sitting up when she heard the bell on the door chime.

“Hey Gravity Girl!” Mei grinned as she bounced up to her table. “Happy Birthday!”

“But...but it’s not my birthday.” She stared at Mei in shocked confusion as she grabbed Ochako’s arm and fastened something around her wrist.

“Nope!” Mei confirmed. “But I got you something! That’s a tracking bracelet! I’ll make you a better one when we get back, but this little baby will keep us from having to chase you down again! We’ll be able to see where you are even if you accidentally warp yourself to America!”

Ochako shuddered, “Oh god, I hope that doesn’t happen.”

“Unfortunately, it’s a possibility.” Izuku ran up to them, hands on his knees as he caught his breath. “But this way, even if it does, we’ll be able to find you!”

“Ok, yeah...that’ll be nice.” Ochako nodded gratefully. “Thanks, Mei.”

“Now come on! We gotta get back to the labs so I can get back to work on my babies!” Mei said. “And not that the hospital gown isn’t a statement piece, but we should get you some actual clothes, come on, let’s get going!”

Ochako stood and stretched, “Yes, please and thank you.”

The two gremlins led her outside, where a red sports car was waiting to pick her up. She recognized the driver from her unfortunate arrival and he smiled when she slid into the backseat, “You must be Ochako Uraraka. It’s nice to officially meet you, I’m Dr. David Shield and this is my daughter Melissa.”

Ochako grimaced, “Sorry about...you know.”

“No, don’t worry about it.” Dr. Shield laughed. “Honestly, now that we know you’re not a security threat and we figured out how you got in, it’s more entertaining than anything else. Freaked us out a bit at first, but we’re good.”

“Well, I’m glad *someone* found it entertaining.” Ochako grumbled. “I honestly wasn’t expecting to learn how to teleport when I woke up this morning.”

“I know! Everyone back in Japan was really…” Izuku’s eyes widened. “Wait, Mei, did you ever tell anyone we found her?”

Mei frowned, “No, I think I assumed you told them and then I was too focused on the tracking bracelet to think about anything else.”

“I believe that our people were focused on making sure our security was up to date and incorporating a warning for gravitational shifts.” Dr. Shield scowled. “How did we forget that?”

“Didn’t you ever call them, Midoriya?” Melissa asked.

Izuku groaned and put his head in his hands, “No, I was busy trying to figure out the quirk science of how she was even warping! Everyone’s probably still freaking out!”

Mei shrugged and grabbed her phone, “Well, better late than never!”

Shouta wasn’t doing well. All the teachers had been called in and some of the more adept reporters were starting to realize that something was wrong. Uraraka’s parents had been contacted and were

with a police escort, but there wasn't a whole lot they could tell them. Their daughter had been missing for over four hours now and they still hadn't found a single lead. He, All Might and Tsukauchi were all gathered in Nedzu's office, grimly combing through what meager evidence they could find as they came to terms with the fact that they had failed as teachers and as heroes.

His phone rang and he took one look at teh caller ID before picking up, "Hatsume, please tell me your safe. I really don't have the time or energy to deal with two…"

"Oh, I know!" Mei interrupted. "I thought you might want to know that we found your missing student!"

Shouta immediately sat up straight, "You found Uraraka?! How did you even... Nevermind, I'm putting you on speaker. Where is she?"

Mei cackled, "She's sitting right next to me! Say hi Gravity Girl!"

Uraraka's voice sounded tired, but *she was there,* "Hi Sensei. Sorry for worrying you."

Nedzu came closer to teh phone, "Nevermind that, young lady. Are you alright?"

"I'm tired and overused my quirk, but I'm already getting my energy back!" Uraraka's voice echoed with a kind of forced cheerfulness. "Don't worry, I'm gonna be fine!"

"I'm glad to hear it." Nedzu said. "Although, if you are with young Midoirya and Hatsume, then…"

"Yeah, that means she's here on I-Island." Midoriya said. "It's complicated. It took us a few hours to even realize she was here, but we're working on it!"

"I'm assuming that Shinso was the one that told you she was missing?" Shouta asked tiredly. "I would probably lecture him about confidentiality, but I guess it's a good thing you were aware she was missing."

"Oh, I'd almost forgotten about Shinso!" Uraraka fretted. "He's probably so…"

Shouta looked at the receiver in confusion as there was a brief shout and then he heard the phone drop and the audio became slightly

muffled as Midoirya started speaking, “Uraraka, focus on me, ok? Don’t think about Shinso or anyone else, just focus on me and Mei and where we are right...and she’s gone. Mei?”

“Already on it.”

There was the sound of shuffling as the phone was picked up and Shouta looked at the others in confusion and worry. What did Midoriya mean *she’s gone?!*

“Ugh. Sorry, I really didn’t think she had enough energy for that already.” Midoriya said finally. “But, uh, good news, Uraraka’s back in Japan and we’ll send Shinso her location so he can pick her up!”

“She…she’s back in Japan?” All Might stuttered. “Young Midoriya, that’s at least a five hour journey!”

Midoriya sighed, “Not really. Do you want the short explanation or the long one?”

Nedzu took the phone, “I believe *any* explanation will do at the moment, Midoirya, thank you.”

That made Midioriya chuckle, “I guess that’s true. Well, basically, I guess I should start by saying that Uraraka does not have a gravity cancellation quirk like we thought. Her quirk, which I think got a lot stronger recently for some reason, is actually some sort of gravity manipulation and, since according to the theory of relativity gravity is basically just bends in spacetime, then, well…”

“Uraraka can use gravity manipulation to warp.” Mei finished. “She uses people as her anchors…”

“Most likely people that she’s already used her quirk on.” Midoirya interrupted. “Otherwise she would have teleported to you, Eraserhead.”

“Yeah, that.” Mei agreed. “But she can’t control it yet, which is why we fitted her with a tracker! She’s across town from Gunhead’s agency, and I’m sending her location to Shinso...now!”

“She’ll probably be a little worse for wear when he finds her.” Midoriya added. “The warp here knocked her out for over two hours. Let us know if you have any questions.”

“Good luck!” Mei hung up, leaving a room full of shocked adults to

process whatever *that* had been.

“Well…” All Might cleared his throat awkwardly. “At least it wasn’t villains?”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.28.2021

New Update Schedule:
Monday: Viridian
Tuesday: Deku
Wednesday: Cheat Code
Thursday: Mastermind
Friday: Viridan

Found

Chapter Summary

Another day of internships!

Chapter Notes

Art!
D4rkCh13f73n

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

From: Kidnapper #1

We found Gravity Girl!

(Location Ping)

Let us know when she disappears again!

Call you with more info tonight!

Hitoshi stared at his phone in a mix of shock and relief. He really shouldn't be surprised that his kidnappers had managed to find his kidnapped friend, but it was still impressive that they'd found her in a matter of hours. Also, should he be concerned that they seemed to fully be expecting her to disappear again.

He shook his head and knocked on the door to Gunhead's office before pushing it open, "I just got a location for Uraraka, I'm going to go pick her up."

Gunhead almost dropped his coffee, "You found her?!"

" *I* didn't find her. My kidnappers did." Hitoshi shrugged. "Sorry, my friends in the support course. They tracked her down somehow. The important thing is that I know where she is and I'm going to go get her. I just wanted to let you know."

"Uh, right." Gunhead set his coffee down and stood up. "Let's go."

Mineta had actually finished the chores Mt. Lady had told him to do hours ago, but she was too absorbed in checking her social media to notice that. She was a new hero, and notoriously obsessed with her image, so it wasn't a hard choice when he needed to find someone to drool over that would still allow him time to keep tabs on all his other classmates.

He hadn't been expecting all that much to happen this week, honestly, except that Iida was most likely going to try to go off the rails, which Sensei would be delighted about if the hero he was interning under couldn't stop him in time, but today had been busier than expected. There was a distinct lack of UA in the media this morning, which meant that they were actively *trying* to stay out of it, which meant that they were hiding something. He hadn't been able to dig up what exactly it was yet, but he'd sent out a few feelers to the rest of his classmates, just asking them how they were doing. None of the girls had responded, which was irritating, but understandable considering his cover, and Shinso was the only guy to leave him on read, which meant that he was either involved in whatever they were trying to cover up, or he was just too close to the girls, either one. If the news didn't break, he'd look into it more tomorrow.

His main interest at the moment was I-Island. The notification that they had gone into lockdown this morning didn't seem like major news for Japan, but Sensei had asked him to keep an eye on the support course and it was odd enough that two of the first years had been asked to intern there. Add an island-wide lockdown to that and it was exactly the type of thing Sensei would want to know about. Maybe if they were lucky, those two had actually *caused* the lockdown and there might be some chance for recruitment. Maybe they could even help the league find this Cheat Code know-it-all who kept breathing down their necks.

"Grape Juice!" Mt. Lady called. "Can you be a babe and get me another soda from the fridge? I'll love you forever!"

"Anything for you, gorgeous!" Mineta read one final notification before putting away his phone and made a note to pass it along in his report.

@I-IslandOfficial

Sorry for any panic this morning's lockdown might have caused. Our experts have determined that a quirk accident was at fault for this morning's apparent security breach. The situation has been resolved and

our security system has been updated to prevent a repeat of this morning's false alarm. No sensitive information was compromised.

Shouto walked a few steps behind Edgeshot, not really sure what he was supposed to be doing at the moment. With Endeavor, he was supposed to be *learning from the best* and projecting as much *don't talk to me* energy as he could, but did other heroes try to seem more likable to the media? Was he supposed to be looking for villains or would that count as getting in the way?

"I can hear you thinking from here." Edgeshot said.

"Oh, sorry." Shouto said quickly. "I'll stop."

Edgeshot stopped and looked at him strangely, "Stop? Why would I ask you to stop thinking? Intelligence is an essential part of being a hero. I just wanted to know what was on your mind."

"Sorry." Shouto apologized again. "I suppose I was just wondering what the purpose of this patrol is. Aren't you mostly a nocturnal hero?"

Edgeshot gave him an appraising look, "Yes, I am. But why do *you* think I would patrol during the day?"

"To catch criminals in the act." Shouto said. "And to be visible to the media."

Edgshot paused thoughtfully for a moment, "The media, yes, partially. The criminals, not so much. Most of my takes downs, like you said, are at night, so I'm content to leave everyday purse snatchers to lesser heroes, but the main reason I routinely patrol during the day is for the people."

"Yes." Shouto nodded. "To protect them."

Edgeshot looked ahead, "That's part of it, but it's actually not what I was referring to. Shouto, do you know why people become villains?"

Shouto got the idea that this was like one of Aizawa's logical ruses, but didnt' know what the trick was, "Because they put their own desires over what's good."

"Sometimes." Edgeshot nodded. "Or they simply don't trust that the law *is* good. A lot of people struggle in this world and if a hero is out

and about during the day, they know that someone is there to save them if ever they need it. We can't save everyone, unfortunately, but even just being visible can keep some from falling into despair and taking matters into their own hands."

"So a hero's job isn't just to protect the defenseless from villains?" Shouto frowned. "Interesting…"

Edgeshot didn't seem like he was expecting anything else from the conversation, so Shouto followed along in silence for a few more minutes. He paid attention to how people looked at them. If he was with Endeavor, he'd be getting both awed and terrified looks, and maybe a few angry, which didn't seem like it would help bring people hope like Edgeshot was describing. The civilians they passed didn't look at Edgeshot with as much obvious admiration as they did Endeavor, but it almost seemed like they trusted him, which was hard to wrap his head around.

Shouto heard a familiar yowl and turned to see Epurr weaving in and out of people's legs as she rushed toward him. Shouto couldn't be bothered to hold back a smile as he crouched down. Seeing a hero student petting a cat on patrol would be reassuring, right? It would piss off his father at the very least.

"Oh wonderful, it's the devil cat." Edgeshot muttered. "Careful. She may *look* cute, but don't…get too close?"

Edgeshot trailed off as Epurr butted up against Shouto's hand and made him scratch her between the ears. She always went for his left side first, which Shouto thought was hilarious. His father spent so much effort and planning to get a child with the perfect duel quirk and he used it to attract cats. It was beautifully ironic.

"Devil cat? Yeah, that describes her pretty well." Shouto said fondly, the corner of his mouth twitching slightly as she purred and headbutted him again. "Epurr can be pretty mean when she doesn't get her way."

When Edgshot didn't respond, Shouto looked up to see him staring at them in shock, "She...Did she really let you name her?!"

Shouto shrugged and stood up, "Is that weird?"

Edgeshot shook his head in disbelief, "You realize that every hero that patrols near here has tried to pet that cat, right? She's scratched at every single one. Anytime anyone tries to give her a name, even some

of the shop owners that feed her, she hisses and refuses to respond to it. That's why we call her the devil cat. She's way more likely to attack you than let her pet you."

He started walking and Shouto followed behind, Epurr ran alongside them, hopping up onto a nearby fence, "Maybe she wasn't in the mood to be pet? From what I've seen she has ways of getting whatever she wants...No, Epurr, not...ok."

Epurr had launched herself off the fence and onto Shouto's shoulder and almost immediately settled in and started grooming him. He reached to grab her and make her go back to the ground, but she simply swatted at him with a hiss and kept working. Shouto pouted and felt his face heat up as he turned to Edgeshot and gave a small bow, careful not to knock Epurr loose, "My apologies sir, but I'm afraid that she never lets me stop her when she gets like this, so unfortunately, this predicament might last a while. I understand that patrolling with a stray cat on my shoulder is highly unprofessional, so if you would like me to return to the agency until the situation is resolved, I…."

He trailed off and straightened up as he realized that Edgeshot was *laughing at him.* Sure, it wasn't loud, but his shoulders were shaking and his eyes were starting to tear up as he held a hand over his mouth, "Ah, this makes much more sense."

"What?" Shouto absentmindedly reached up to pet Epurr, who purred and flicked him with her tail. "I'm deeply…"

"I had thought you managed to tame her." Edgeshot chuckled. "But nope. I guess it's just a rule of the universe that the devil cat can't be tamed."

"I wasn't trying to tame her." Shouto insisted. "I was just sitting down once and she came and sat on my lap because I have a fire quirk and it makes me warm."

"Burnin' has a fire quirk too, and she's never been able to get close to the little devil." Even with his mask, Shouto could tell that Edgeshot was smiling. "Nope, I can't believe that...what did you call her? Epurr? I'm pretty sure she thinks you're her kitten."

"What?" Shouto blinked. "I'm sorry, but you're mistaken. I'm much larger than a kitten."

Edgeshot rolled his eyes, "Yes, I'm aware of that. But adoption is

pretty common in cats, actually, and they'll even adopt babies from other species if the real parents aren't around. To her, she may not have given birth to you, but she's acting like she just woke up one day and decided to be your mother. So I'm sorry to break it to you, Shouto, but you're adopted."

Shouto huffed softly, "Well, Epurr just needs to give me a good scratch and I'll have scars from *both* my moms."

Edgeshot frowned, "What was that? Sorry, you were muttering and I didn't quite catch it."

"Oh nothing." Shouto shook his head. "Wait a minute...are those people taking pictures?!"

Edgeshot chuckled again, "Are you kidding? Kid, this is why we go on patrol. You're going to be trending by the time school lets out."

"Oh." Shouto took a deep breath and Epurr's presence on his shoulder was oddly steadying considering that this was all her fault. "Ok. That's a good thing, right?"

"Yes." Edgeshot shook his head in amusement. "Yes, Shouto. That's a very good thing."

Hitoshi looked down at his phone again, then up at the park, "Well, according to Izuku and Mei, she should be somewhere around here, hopefully. They did warn me that she might disappear again though, so I guess I could text and ask if they know anything?"

Gunhead nodded, "Yes, that would probably be best."

Hitoshi was halfway through a text when a yell from the playground caught his attention, "No! Get away from there! You don't know what kinds of diseases that thing has!"

A little girl was trying to tug herschel free as her mother pulled her away, "It's not a thing, it's a person! What if they need to go to the hospital?!" She caught sight of Hitoshi and Gunhead and immediately started waving them over with her whole arm, "Are you guys heroes! We need your help!"

They shared a glance before Gunhead put on a happier voice and bounced over, "Of course. We can't say long, we're looking for someone you see, but I'm sure we can get someone to help out with

whatever the issue is."

"It's not an issue." The mother groaned. "It's just a drunk who decided that the playground was a good place to sleep after a mid-morning bender. I looked up from my phone and there she was, a raggedy thing puking in the trashcan before crawling in the tunnel and passing out. Disgusting. I mean, she wasn't even wearing any shoes! I don't want my daughter being around those kinds of influences, I'm sure you understand."

"She was puking?" Shinso blinked, "Where did you say she went?"

"Over there in the play tunnel!" The little girl slipped out of her mom's grip and grabbed Hitoshi's hand, "Here! I'll take you to her!"

"Aia! Get back here right this instant!"

Aia didn't listen as she dragged Hitoshi to the playground and tugged him to the ground outside the tunnel, "Look! There! Can you help her?"

"I am so sorry." Aia's mother grabbed her by the shoulder as Hitoshi knelt down to look inside the tunnel. "You need to apologize to the heroes! You can't just go grabbing them, they have important things to do!"

"But, Mom…!" Aia started to protest, but stopped when she saw Hitoshi's face. "Mr. Hero? What is it? What's wrong?"

"Nothing." Hitoshi tried to smile reassuringly, but he had a feeling it fell flat. "I just need to yell at my friends to make sure they give me all the information next time they send me to find someone. Gunhead! Over here! I found her!"

The sunset was beautiful and Kurogiri wished he could pay it the attention it deserved, but young Tomura was enjoying the view for a very different reason. He grinned as he scratched at his neck, the three Nomu that Sensei had given him standing dead-eyed and at the ready, waiting for their orders. Even if he should be used to it by now, it was still creepy enough to send a shiver down Kurogiri's spine.

"I'll show him!" Shigaraki grinned. "Let's see who's in the news tomorrow, hero killer!"

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.05.2021

Warmth

Chapter Summary

For better or worse, the day continues.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Opalizero
Ireth
Kuno

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku frowned as he looked at his notes from the morning, “I really don’t think I want to do any of these ideas.”

“I know!” Mei scribbled something frantically and tore a page out of her sketchbook, crumpling it and tossing it over her shoulder as she started jotting things down again. “Gravity Girl’s new quirk is giving me so many good ideas!”

“It’s not a new quirk.” Izuku rolled his eyes. “Actually, it does kind of act like one, doesn’t it? I wonder…”

Melissa giggled as she watched them both bury themselves in their notes, “You can still change your mind, you know! Normally you would have already picked your projects, but today obviously wasn’t normal. Besides, since Dad wasn’t around this morning, you pretty much have until he comes back to really make your decisions. What do you have in mind?”

“Well, my first thought is to find a way to stop Uraraka from teleporting with a support item or something.” Izuku said, grabbing his laptop. “But I don’t think that will be very practical, and repressing a quirk can often make it more difficult to control, so it’ll be best to just throw that out the window.”

“Hmm.” Melissa said. “I mean, I wouldn’t know, but that makes sense. I wonder if you could make something like training wheels, Mei? Like, to help her learn to control her quirk?”

“I like the way you think, Lab Assistant!” Mei grinned and wrote a few things down, then groaned. “But there’s a lot of mistakes and explosions between now and being able to use technology to impact gravity. We need to grow a few more giants before we can stand on their shoulders!”

Izuku thought for a moment, “I mean, I know you already gave her the bracelet, Mei-chan, but I could always perfect this program for tracking her warps.”

“That’s an idea. It could help her find patterns in where she usually ends up and help her warp more accurately.” Melissa nodded encouragingly. “And didn’t you try to use it to predict that she was about to disappear in the car?”

Izuku’s eyes widened, “Oh yeah! I mean, the program is just tracking her gravity fluctuations and everything starts going wonky before she teleports, so if I get it running fast enough…”

Melissa grinned as she finished his thought, “Then she could potentially have enough warning to stop unintentional warps!”

“You’d need a good alarm system.” Mei said. “Sure, you could always do an app, but that’s no fun! And what if she doesn’t have her phone?! It would need to be small, portable, and…”

She trailed off as her eye caught on Melissa, who started fidgeting as the seconds dragged on, “Um, Mei? Is something wrong? Is there something on my face or something?”

Mei’s face slowly morphed into a terrifying grin, “Your earrings!”

“M-my earrings?” Melissa took a step back.

Izuku gasped, “That’s brilliant Mei-chan! Melissa! You invented those to counteract panic attacks, right? How do they work?”

Melissa stopped and she slowly started smiling as well as she caught up to what they were thinking, “They track a person’s vital signs so they can send an alert when their heart rate or breathing goes too high. I’ve been brainstorming different options, but it shouldn’t be that hard to just make them beep when the activation requirements are met.”

“Good.” Izuku opened up his tracking program, “I can debug this program and focus on giving Uraraka as much warning as possible

before she warps and Mei-chan can…"

"Figure out how to make gravity sensors fit inside a pair of earrings!" Mei's eyes zoomed in anticipation and she made grabby hands to tell Melissa to hand over the jewelry. "Oooh! This baby is gonna be so much fun!!!"

Melissa giggled as she took out her earrings and handed one to each of them, "You guys really *are* a power couple, aren't you?"

Izuku fumbled the earring and almost dropped it as he blushed a bright red, "Power couple?! Uh, we, uh, we're not dating or anything! Mei's just my best friend and I mean, I know we spend a lot of time together and everything, but that doesn't mean..."

"Yeah, I just use Izu-kun to help me make babies." Mei said distractedly, eyes already moving rapidly to visually dissect every tiny detail of the earring on the table in front of her. "Lab assistant, get your dad already! I need to take a look at your gravity sensors!"

Hitoshi had half-dozed off by the time Uraraka groaned and blinked her eyes open, "Ugh, I feel like I just puked a skittles factory."

Hitoshi flinched awake and he almost fell out of his chair, but after half a second, he breathed a sigh of relief as he double-checked that Uraraka was here. She was safe on Gunhead's couch. She was fine.

He chuckled and shook his head, "Yeah, well, for all I know, you did. What happened? Izuku and Mei didn't give me any details on what happened, they just told me where to find you. We were all so worried about you."

Uraraka played with a bracelet on her wrist that Hitoshi didn't recognize, "Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you, Shindig, I just was stupid and thought I could just push it down, but then I lost control and...yeah, somehow I ended up on I-Island."

Hitoshi blinked, "Uh, can you maybe run that by me again?"

Uraraka sighed, "I accidentally bent space-time, teleported to I-Island. Yeah, it's about as crazy as it sounds."

"Whoa." Hitoshi took a second to process that. "Uh, that's one hell of a quirk evolution, I guess."

That made Uraraka snort and she shook her head as she sat up, “Yeah. It’s great! And what’s even better is that I can’t stay put because I can’t control it yet. It’s a real joy.”

Hitoshi chuckled and ran a hand through his hair, “So that’s why you disappeared?”

“And why I’ll probably disappear again.” Uraraka nodded and slumped back against the armrest. “I feel like I’m turning into you! I’m just exhausted!”

He gave her a small smile, “Are you sure you want to add a terrible sleep schedule to everything you’ve got going on?”

“Ugh, no!” Uraraka rubbed her eyes. “How about this, Shindig, you keep your sleep issues and I keep my disappearing act. Deal?”

She held out her hand for a fist bump and Hitoshi returned it, “Deal. Also, where did the Shindig nickname come from? It’s not bad, it’s just...why?”

Uraraka chuckled, “Uh, it’s dumb. I just wanted payback after you confused the hell out of everyone with your quirk activation requirements at the sports festival and thought a dumb nickname would be a fun way to confuse you back.” She frowned. “Not that I haven’t done a bang up job of that already.”

“Yeah, you *definitely* threw me for a loop, but whatever.” Hitoshi shrugged. “Um, am I supposed to have a nickname for you? I mean, you have one for me and I *did* just pull you out of a play tunnel an hour ago, so…?”

Uraraka blushed and buried her face in her hands, “Ugh, don’t remind me! That’s so embarrassing! Those kids probably thought I was crazy or something!”

“Drunk, actually.” Hitoshi pointed out helpfully. “So, what nickname do you want?”

Uraraka groaned.

By the time Izuku and Mei called, Ochako was feeling a little more like herself. She hadn’t teleported at all since getting back to Japan, but she had a sneaking suspicion that she probably would have if she wasn’t so exhausted from two long jumps and all the little ones she’d

made while on I-Island. She'd had the weird world-tilty feeling a few times, whenever she thought about Mei or Izuku or really any one of her friends that wasn't in the room with her, but she hadn't gone anywhere, so for now, she figured that as long as she stayed close to Shinso, there wasn't much risk of her ending up somewhere she wasn't intending to be. That might change in a couple of hours, depending on how much One for All hated her at the moment, but that was a tomorrow problem.

Shinso's phone rang just as everyone was finishing up dinner and he took one look at the caller ID and picked up, "Hey Izuku, how are you? Next time you send me a cryptic location, could you add a few details?"

Ochako giggled as she imagined Izuku panicking on the other end of the phone, but she stopped when Gunhead came up behind her and put a hand on her shoulder, "Alright you two, let's take this to my office."

Her heart sank and even though she knew she probably wasn't, she couldn't shake the feeling that she was in trouble. She *had* messed up. Maybe if she had just tried to use One for All earlier or if she'd realized her quirk was gravity manipulation or if she had better self control than she wouldn't have made everyone panic by disappearing out of the blue like that. It was her fault that everyone had thought she'd been kidnapped or something, despite that she had no control over it. More accurately, it was her fault *because* she had no control over it.

She dragged her feet as Gunhead closed the door behind them, "Alright, put it on speaker. I'm your hero mentor and in order to help you, I need to know what's going on too. Is that alright?"

Shinso raised an eyebrow at Ochako, who took a deep breath before nodding resolutely. Gunhead was here to teach her and help her. She'd *already* learned a lot, even though she'd only really had a couple of hours to spar with him yesterday and today had been, well, today, so she just had to trust that he wouldn't judge her *too* harshly for losing control of her quirk.

Shinso shrugged and pressed the button, "Alright, almighty kidnappers, care to explain what in the world is going on?"

"I mean, Uraraka should have explained part of it already." Izuku said.

"I explained what I *know."* Ochako interrupted. "But that isn't really

that much. I mean, I get that I'm warping space-time and it seems to be related to people, but, uh...that's pretty much all I know."

Gunhead took the phone from Shinso and set it on the desk, "What we really need to know is what's causing her to teleport and what we can do to help her control it. These kids seem to think you know what you're talking about, so do you have any advice?"

"Can you tell me how to stop?" Ochako added desperately. "It would be really nice to be able to just turn it off."

"Unfortunately, that's not really gonna be an option." Izuku said sheepishly. "Until you get enough practice and learn how to control it, you're probably going to instinctively teleport to any anchor that pops into your head."

"Anchor?" Shinso said. "Those are people, right?"

"Yep!" Izuku sounded excited. "So, I've been thinking about it and I'm pretty sure how it works now! Uraraka, when you use your quirk on someone, you don't just cancel their gravity, you basically change it somehow. We're gonna have to run a few more tests with that part. But! That means that your quirk basically becomes familiar with the way gravity naturally affects them and you can use that unique gravity signature as an anchor to warp to them! With training, you might even be able to use objects, but that will probably be a lot more difficult, since people are more distinct in weight, body shape, muscle distribution…"

Shinso rolled his eyes, "So what you're saying is that once she's canceled a person's gravity once, she can find them forever?"

"Pretty much!" Mei jumped in. "Well, unless they go on a diet or get fat or something."

"Yeah." Izuku agreed. "A bit of fluctuation shouldn't affect things, but if their gravity signature changes *too* much, then you'll probably have to use your quirk on them again to refamiliarize yourself."

"Ok." Ochako sighed. "So basically, anyone who I've ever activated my quirk on could be receiving a surprise visit from me at any time?"

"For right now, yeah, sorry." Izuku said.

"But we're gonna help!" Mei said. "Izu-kun has this really cool program that he's rewriting to help predict your jumps! And I'm

gonna make you some super awesome earrings that'll warn you when you're about to go *poof!"*

"We're going to hopefully have them ready by the end of internship week." Izuku added. "For now, it's clunky, but I can send Hitoshi an app that'll do basically what the earrings are supposed to do and if it's a bad time and you don't want to warp, he can brainwash you and order you to stay."

"Will that actually work?" Shinso asked skeptically.

"No idea!" Mei answered. "Now come on, Izu-kun! Dr. Shield's almost here with the circuit boards and I wanted to have the prototypes ready with the…"

Ochako ended the call and sighed as she headed toward the door, "It's gonna be a long week, isn't it?"

"Sure is." Shinso agreed. "I'd offer to brainwash you the whole time, but uh, not quite there yet."

"It's fine." Ochako said. "I need to learn eventually, right?"

"And you're gonna do great!" Gunhead said. "This is what internships are for! Learning new skills and doing hard things! And you know what? You have me and Shinso and all the other interns here to help you out, all right?"

Ochako gave a small smile in spite of everything, "Yeah! Let's do it!"

They walked back into the common room where all the other interns were hanging out only to see them all crowded around the tv and watching the news tensely. Gunhead immediately took charge, "What's going on?"

"There's an attack in Hosu." One of them answered. "There's, like, these monster things attacking everything and tearing things up."

"Monsters?" Ochako got closer to the screen and gasped. "That's a nomu. What the hell is a nomu doing in Hosu?!"

"So it's the league?" Shinso frowned. "That's not good. I mean, obviously, but uh...nobody here's from Hosu, are they?"

Everyone shook their heads and Ochako frowned, "I mean, wasn't that where Ingenium was? Wait, Iida's intern…"

Shinso shouted her name, but she couldn't really focus on him with the way the world was shifting. After a moment, things stopped spinning and she swallowed a wave of nausea as she looked around, "Ok, I'm still here. I guess quirk exhaustion has its perks, heh?"

Shinso glared at her, "Seriously? You freaked me out! I thought you were gonna just pop right into the middle of an attack and pass out again!"

"Yeah." Ochako chuckled. "That wouldn't have been fun...passing out sounds like a really good idea though! I think I'm gonna go do that."

Shouto followed behind Edgeshot, stomping the street to create another ice slide as the chaos finally wound down. His father would probably be pissed that he'd been relegated to rescue work the whole time, but Edgeshot didn't make it feel like a punishment or a second tier of heroism at all! He just gave Shouto permission to use his quirk, then went and saved as many people as they could, simple as that. No explanation. No complaining. Just rescuing any civilians who had been unlucky enough to be in the upper stories of the surrounding buildings when the Nomu attacked. It was odd.

Shouto was starting to shiver at this point, but Edgeshot had been told that the monsters had all been captured, so it wouldn't be too much longer until he'd be able to get back to the agency and warm up. He just had to push through it until then and he'd be fine. He could do this.

The building they were currently working with was close to collapsing, but Shouto held his slide steady as Edgeshot herded all the people onto it. He gave the signal for all clear and Shouto had to hold back a sigh of relief as he stopped producing ice. Just a little longer.

He heard a cat scream behind him and whirled around to see Epurr standing far too close to the ruined building to be safe, "What are you doing, you stupid cat?! Get away from there! The building's coming down!"

Epurr just screamed at him again and took a few steps into the alley she'd come from, which unfortunately meant she was even closer to the building. Shouto felt like the panic was starting to choke him as he gestured wildly for her to come closer, "Come on! Epurr! Don't...No!"

He heard a crack and his eyes widened as the building started falling, a piece of the wall breaking off and hurtling down right toward the

alley Epurr was standing in, still screaming at him with no idea of the amount of danger she was in. Shouto didn't have time to think. He rushed forward, ignoring his father's voice in his head saying that love was weakness and that he was risking his future as the ultimate masterpiece. No, his only thought was that he couldn't let an angry orange street cat die.

He dove toward Epurr, wrapping himself around her and creating an ice dome around both of them seconds before the wall slammed down on top of them. The ice creaked ominously, cracking along one side, but ultimately held firm. Shoto didn't uncurl as he desperately scratched behind Epurr's ear, "What were you thinking?! I...you can't leave me like she did! You're...I won't let you!"

Epurr was shivering in his arms and Shouto realized with a start that he was hurting her. He had been creating ice for hours. He knew he was basically a human glacier at this point, and yet, here he was, holding himself right up against her as her hisses and meows grew a little weaker. He hesitated. He'd vowed to never use his father's side in battle and even if this was just a rescue, it was still undeniably a battle, but...Epurr gave another violent shiver and Shouto's face hardened in determination.

His left side was his father's side, but if it meant saving this stupid cat, he'd just have to steal it back. It wasn't his father's side, not anymore. It was his and he wasn't about to let that flame-bearded bastard hurt anyone else he cared about ever again.

He activated his fire side, careful not to warm up too quickly so he didn't burn her, and she'd barely stopped shivering when Edgeshot squeezed his way through one of the cracks, "That was reckless, kid, but it looks like you got it done. Good job."

Shouto uncurled himself slightly as Epurr started hissing again and scratching to be let down, "I don't know what's gotten into her! She just wouldn't come!"

Edgeshot frowned and looked at her, "Cats are smarter than we give them credit for, that one in particular. I'm pretty sure she wants you to follow her."

Shouto looked down at the cat in his arms, who was still fighting to leave, and nodded as he let her go, "Ok. Lead the way."

Epurr scratched at the cold wall of ice that her kitten had made and

hissed at him to go faster. She didn't know why he was so cold today when he was normally so warm, but they didn't have time for that! His littermate was in trouble!

She'd been trying to avoid the chaos, she really had. A cat didn't survive on the streets as long as she had if they were stupid enough to run *toward* every fight they saw, but when she'd been looking for a quiet corner to lay low, she'd caught a scent. It was familiar, at least a little, and she recognized it as one of the scents that always clung to him when he visited her from the other kittens he spent his days with. His littermates.

But the other kitten was in trouble and Epurr couldn't do anything against an attacker with such big claws. Her kitten was strong though, even though he didn't think so, and it was her responsibility to make sure her kitten was socialized correctly and knew how to treat and protect his littermates! She had to get him!

She'd been so focused that she'd almost put *herself* in danger too, but her kitten had saved her and even warmed himself up in the process, which in any other situation would have made her purr with happiness, but today, she needed to take care of him and he needed to take care of that other poor kitten.

Her kitten melted a hole in the ice large enough for both of them to crawl through and Epurr immediately shot off like a rocket, weaving through the familiar alleys and only stopping occasionally to let her kitten and his babysitter catch up. Almost there…

When she reached the alley, the attacker was already gone and the scent of blood made her hiss and crinkle her nose, screaming for her kitten as she pawed at his littermate. He was still warm, still alive for now, but if her kitten didn't help him soon…

She turned to look at her kitten as he pounded into the alley, skidding to a stop and gasping as she urged him to *stop gawking and just hurry already!* He just kept staring though, and a soft whisper escaped him as he stood rooted to the cement, "Iida…"

Thankfully, her kitten's babysitter wasn't more than a few seconds behind and he was at least a little calmer than her poor stressed-out kitten, grabbing at his ear and speaking to someone that she couldn't see, "Paramedics? This is Edgeshot. I need two ambulances to my location, priority one."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.12.2021

Anchor

Chapter Summary

> Uraraka finds a new way to practice and the I-Island crew is hard at work.

Chapter Notes

> Art!
> MagicalGirl_23
> X Claire;P
> dreadedthyme
>
> Cosplay!
> @eeveeiseevil.cos
>
> Memes!
> X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ochako had never been so grateful to be tired. Apparently, the trip to I-Island and back had burned through all the energy from her week of repressing One for All, so it was taking her longer to recover than it had when she'd first started teleporting, which she would normally have found really frustrating, but right now, she was just relieved. If she was tired, then that limited how far she could warp and it seemed like the only person who was in that radius at the moment was Shinso, so the farthest she'd ended up in the past day was a block from the agency. It was a nice change of pace.

Being grounded also meant that she could actually focus on the quirkless sparring techniques that Gunhead was teaching them. They were fun, but she could also see how they were going to be useful in their fights. Her match against Bakugo would have been so much easier with skills like that under her belt.

They'd just finished the last spar of the day when Gunhead clapped his hands to get their attention, "Alright everybody! We're gonna do something a little different for our cooldown today! We're gonna play a game of hide and seek with our very own Uravity!"

Ochako blinked in confusion as everyone turned to look at her, "What?"

“Hide and go seek!” Gunhead repeated, grinning. “You use your quirk on all of us so you can use everyone as anchors. Then we’ll all spread out throughout the agency and you try to get as close to your target as possible! It’ll be a nice way for the boys to wind down after a long day of training, and it’ll be great quirk training for you, so it’s a win-win! Plus it’s fun!”

“I mean, he has a point.” Shinso said. “You’ll be able to focus on accuracy without exhausting yourself or throwing up again, since the jumps will be pretty short...”

“That’s a good point.” Ochako said thoughtfully, “It’s not gonna help me stay put through, is it?”

“Uh, no...” Gunhead grimaced apologetically. “But at your current energy level, it looks like you’re confined to the city right? So we don’t have to worry about you going too far away!”

“Only until she gets her energy back up.” Shinso pointed out. “Then it’s off to wherever the whims of fate take her!”

“Well, then your goal is to control fate, so then at least you’ll know where you’re going!” Gunhead gave them a big thumbs up, “I believe in you!”

“Well, you already control gravity.” Shinso shrugged. “So why not? Shouldn’t be too hard.”

Ochako clenched her fists in determination, “Alright! Let’s do this!”

Izuku sighed, “No, Mei-chan, you can’t make Uraraka get gauges.”

“But it’d be so much easier to fit the tech!” Mei groaned. “No, it’s ok! I’m Mei Hatsume! I can do this!”

“Yeah, gauges might not fit her marketing image very well.” Melissa agreed. “But we’ve already managed to make the sensing tech almost three times smaller, so we’re making progress.”

Mei glared at her, “That’s not that special when the original tech is the size of a room.”

“Mei, just go explode something already.” Izuku said, turning back to his computer. “You’ll feel better, I promise.”

“Alright, fine!” Mei scooped an armful of suspicious items off the table

and stomped off to one of the testing rooms, which started giving off muffled booms within seconds of her going in. She was always such a fast worker.

“It’s cute how you always seem to know what she needs.” Melissa gave him a sly smile. “I wish *I* had a boyfriend like that.”

Izuku almost deleted an entire paragraph of code as he jumped and almost slammed his hands into the keyboard, “I-I already told you! We’re not dating or anything! We’re just good friends!”

Melissa laughed, “I’m just messing with you, Midoriya, don’t worry! But still, the relationship that you two *do* have, even if it’s just friendship, just seems so special. We inventors can be intimidating sometimes, so having someone around who can encourage our weirdness and give us permission to go make things explode sometimes? It’s rare, but it can make all the difference in the world to us, especially when projects get frustrating. I just think it’s sweet that you’re willing to be that person for her.”

Izuku shrugged and got back to work, “It’s not that special. I mean, it’s no more that what she does for me. People can find my analysis…creepy? But Mei-chan just thinks it’s cool, and she’s really one of the only people I’ve ever met that really support me and thinks I can do anything, so honestly, I’m just returning the favor.”

Melissa frowned sympathetically, “Bullies?”

“Yeah.” Izuku nodded. “But, I mean, I wanted to be a hero as a kid, so obviously people weren’t going to support that.”

“Why not?” Melissa asked.

She looked genuinely confused and Izuku realized with a start that she probably didn’t know. Quirks weren’t that important in support internships, after all. His first instinct was to hide it. He could just come up with an excuse about being a crybaby or something, but his inner Mei was screaming at him to stop being such a coward and just own up to it. Eventually, he decided to compromise between the two, if she really wanted to know, she could ask more questions, “Quirk stuff.”

“What is your quirk, if you don’t mind me asking?” Melissa asked. “When Dad showed me your file, the quirk section was just blank. Uncle Might’s is kinda like that too, so I was wondering if it was confidential or something? Like I said, it might be a rude question, so

you don't have to tell me or anything, I was just curious."

Izuku swallowed, "No, uh, it's not confidential, just...nonexistent?"

Melissa's eyes widened, "Oh..."

Izuku nodded, his mouth dry, "Yeah. Quirkless heroes don't really exist though, so I had to find another dream."

"Me too." Melissa said. "I wanted to be a hero too. I mean, what kid doesn't, right? But, uh, after Dad got the x-rays back and we realized my quirk wasn't just late, Uncle Might encouraged me to follow my Dad's example and go into support."

Izuku stopped and stared at her, "You're quirkless too?!"

Melissa smiled sadly, "Yep. Certifiably part of the less evolved."

"Woah." Izuku sat back in his chair. "I guess we all end up in support, then, huh?"

Melissa shrugged, "If you can't join them, help them, right?"

Izuku chuckled, "Right. It's so frustrating sometimes, though, because, like, I *know* quirks and sometimes I'll see someone and think, *oh, they could just be so much more powerful if they just did things this way* . I mean, sometimes, I just wanna say, *ok, give it here and just let me do it!* You know?"

Melissa laughed, "I thought I was the only one! It's just so frustrating! I'll make an item for someone, but then I can't really test it because using technology to imitate a quirk can only get you so far. And then, of course, they refuse to use it because they think relying on their quirk is enough, so it doesn't even matter."

"You get it!" Izuku tore at his hair. "It's just so frustrating! And then, of course, they have the audacity to look at you and tell you that you don't know what you're talking about, just because you can't change your eye color! It's like they think being quirkless is a mental disability, not a physical one."

"They really do though." Melissa made a face. "I had a teacher in elementary school that tried to put me in remedial classes, even though I was at the top of my grade in academics."

"Oof." Izuku grimaced. "That sucks."

Melissa nodded seriously, “Yeah, it was ridiculous. Thankfully, though, I went crying to Dad and he pulled me out the next day. He didn’t stand for anyone treating me like I was less than anyone else just because I was quirkless.”

“I wish my mom was like that.” Izuku’s eyes widened and he hurried to explain. “Not that she was bad or anything! She did her best, I know that! It’s just that she’d trust the teachers sometimes, you know? Especially near the beginning. It didn’t help that she always just thought I was weaker than everyone else. I mean, I get it, my best friend as a toddler has an insane quirk, so she was probably just comparing me to him, but I had a teacher who wouldn’t let me play outside during recess because I’d *break,* and she didn’t even question it.”

“Wow…” Melissa gave a low whistle. “Yeah, I guess wanting to be a hero wouldn’t really be the easiest thing for her to swallow.”

Izuku shugged, “At least she supports my analysis. It keeps me away from fights, ish, so yeah. I get to save people and she gets to stop worrying about whether or not I’m safe. We both win.”

They worked in silence for a few seconds, listening to Mei’s explosions through the wall, before Melissa spoke up again, “Are you glad you changed your mind and picked support instead?”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah, if I hadn’t, I never would have met Mei-chan or done any of the amazing things I’ve been able to do. It’s fulfilling and I’m able to be successful and even respected. That never would have happened if I’d still been chasing after an impossible dream.”

Melissa nodded and she looked like she was about to say something when the door to the testing room slammed open and Mei came out, covered head to toe in soot, “I figured it out! We just need to vaporize everything that’s unnecessary! Back to work!”

Izuku smiled and shook his head fondly, rolling his eyes when Melissa shot him a knowing smile. They may just be friends, but he was beyond lucky to have a friend like her.

“Everyone’s in position.” Hitoshi said. “You ready?”

Uraraka scrunched her nose in frustration, “No. I’m probably not gonna be able to find any of them. It’s gonna be so embarrassing.”

“Yep.” Hitoshi nodded. “Sure will.”

Uraraka glared at him, “Gee thanks, Shindig. I’m glad I have your undying support.”

“You’re welcome!” He gave her a shit-eating grin. “But, hey, now you have to prove me wrong.”

She kept her glare up for as long as she could before bursting into a fit of laughter, “Ugh, this is gonna be terrible. Who should I try to find first?”

“Hmm, Gunhead maybe?” Hitoshi shrugged. “I mean, it *is* his agency, so…”

The app Izuku had sent him beeped and Hitoshi blinked as he watched Uraraka disappear. When she was actually *trying* to jump, the process was a little bit slower than when she did it by accident, and he couldn’t keep his jaw from dropping at what he saw. It only lasted a split second, but for that tiny moment after Uraraka had activated her quirk and before she’d warped to wherever she was thinking of, it was like the entire energy of the universe had lit up around her. He didn’t know if it was because she was messing with space and gravity or if it was just something about her quirk, but it was one of the most beautiful sights he had ever seen.

Uraraka had been surrounded by the aurora borealis.

Chapter End Notes

> Yes, I am aware that the northern lights are caused more by electromagnetic fields than by gravity, but even if the science doesn't exactly work, the mental image of Ochako having the aurora borealis in place of Deku's lightning was just so gorgeous that I couldn't resist. It gives off all the cool space vibes!
>
> Next Update: 05.19.2021

Possibilities

Chapter Summary

Internships continue!

Chapter Notes

Art!
That's so Yikes X
SA Sparks
Toad #3
A True Gentlebee
Law

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku muttered to himself as he worked, not bothering to stop it, since the only people around to hear him weren't going to be annoyed, "So then, if we use that marker and adjust the sensitivity…"

He jumped when Dr. Shield laughed, "You know, Nedzu said you two were impressive, but I just have to say, I wasn't expecting you to tackle revolutionary technology in your first week."

Izuku blushed, "Uh...I mean, it's not *that* revolutionary, is it? Gravity tracking already exists and all the components…"

"Are being used in new and interesting ways." Dr. Shield finished. "That's what progress is, Midoriya. It's taking something that already exists and changing it to fill a need, just like you're doing for your friend."

Izuku winced, "I guess you probably think it's insane to work so hard just for one person, huh? I mean, aren't support companies supposed to develop and sell to as many people as possible?"

To his surprise, Dr. Shield shrugged, "That actually comes later, most of the time. What usually happens is that you invent something first and then find more uses for it later, because most needs aren't unique. Just look at what Hatsume is working on. Melissa came up with the concept to help panic attacks, and now she's using it to predict a

difficult quirk. Imagine how revolutionary those earrings will be in a few years when she figures out how to modify them to other quirks as well and starts marketing them to children who haven't quite figured things out yet. There's a possibility that she could make childhood quirk accidents almost non-existent with the basic tech that she's working on now. Inventions are made to build off of one another and *grow,* it's how we move forward."

Izuku bit his lip thoughtfully, "Mei says something like that a lot. Basically, she says that failure is a good thing because every failure helps fuel the next success."

Dr. Shield smiled, "She's pretty smart."

Izuku nodded dramatically in agreement, "Definitely. She's amazing. And she knows it, which is even more impressive."

Dr. Shield laughed. "Just remember that you're allowed to steal some of that confidence for yourself too! Your work has just as much potential as hers does, you know. For example, let's consider that program you're writing. What do you want to do?"

Izuku frowned and looked at his almost finished code, "It's supposed to track Uraraka's quirk so that we know where she is without having to rely on a GPS tracker, which could be dangerous once she's a pro-hero."

"That's a good base. It will be very useful to both her and her support team when she's a hero." Dr. Shield praised. "Now let's start taking away those original boundaries. Who else can your program help? What else can it do?"

What else *could* it do? He'd designed it with Uraraka in mind, so could it even be used for anyone else? It was primarily a tracking program, but that was really only useful for people who were going to be teleporting, and there weren't many others. That Izuku knew of, it was only Uraraka, a couple civilians, and Kurogiri…

"Oh…" Izuku's eyes widened. *"Oh…"*

"Come up with something good?" Dr. Shield grinned. "Those ideas are the lifeblood of innovation. Keep on working. I'm excited to see what you come up with."

Shigaraki wasn't going to be happy. Sure, the league had made front

page in the newspaper and the media wouldn't stop talking about the attack, but it seemed like every single news outlet had decided to balance the tragedy and fear from the Nomu attack with a feelgood story about Todoroki and that stupid cat. There were even *memes* about him!

But, of course, Shigaraki was a worse attention hog than Mt. Lady, so Mineta assumed he wouldn't be content with just that, especially since his most recent tantrum probably meant that Stain had rejected the offer to join. No Stain meant that pretty much the only thing they'd actually accomplished was the USJ attack, which obviously didn't make them seem competent. Recruiting Stain would have added to their credibility and elevated their status in the underworld, hopefully leading to new recruits in the future, but now that was gone and all that was left was Shigaraki throwing temper tantrums.

Real good publicity, right there.

"Are you really just gonna stare at Mt. Lady's ass the entire patrol?" Jiro snapped. "Seriously, if I'd known our mentors were going to work together, I would have gone with someone else."

"Mt. Lady and Death Arms work together all the time." Mineta said sweetly, stalling as he recovered from spacing out. "Unlike you, *I* did my research!"

"Ugh." Jiro sneered down at him with disgust. "Stupid little grape. You planned this!"

He hadn't, but he wasn't opposed to letting her think he put all his energy into peeping, rather than spying, "Guilty as charged! Aww, don't be like that! I just like you girls so much…"

She jammed her earphone jack at him and he only just managed to close his eyes in time, "Yeah, yeah, shut up."

"Ooh…" Mineta smirked. "I like a girl who takes charge."

Jiro gagged, "Gross. I'm going to go get lunch. Don't you dare follow me."

Normally, he would have ignored her and followed her anyway, but he'd gotten a text from Kurogiri earlier to call as soon as possible, which normally meant a mission. There was a chance it was just another *side quest* from Shigaraki, but it was always possible that the assignment came from All for One, in which case, it was best not to

ignore it.

After checking to make sure Mt. Lady wouldn't miss him, he found a quiet alleyway to duck into and pulled out his phone. It rang twice before Kurogiri picked up, "Hello. I hope your information gathering is going well."

"Of course it is." Mineta grinned. "I'm not an amature."

"I should hope not." Kurogiri drawled. "Otherwise this next mission would be far outside of your expertise."

"Oh?" Mineta started to get excited. "And what is the next mission?"

"Stain." Kurogiri said simply. "Sensei wants you to capture him."

Mineta choked, "Capture Stain?! The hero killer?!"

"Will that be a problem?" Kurogiri challenged. "I thought that with your quirk, capturing a man who relies on hit and run techniques would be child's play, but if not, I can always let Sensei know that…"

"I'll do it." Mineta assured quickly. "Just ask Sensei when he wants it done."

"You have two weeks." Kurogiri responded. "Don't disappoint us."

Ochako felt like she was finally getting the hang of this teleportation thing. She couldn't quite use it in a fight yet, but in tonight's game of hide and seek, she'd been able to consistently get to approximately the same hallway as her target, even if she'd never managed to find the correct room. She was getting used to the sensations of both teleportation and One for All and she was even starting to figure out how different anchor points felt. It wasn't much, but it was still progress!

The system Midoirya had suggested for preventing her warps worked decently well, and with teh extra warning, Shinso was able to stop her about half the time. They never had more than a few seconds, though, which meant that Shinso had had to tell her how his quirk worked. He'd pulled her aside just before breakfast and she'd been terrified at first because he'd just looked so nervous.

"I need to be able to brainwash you quickly, Uraraka." He'd refused to look her in the eye as he spoke. *"Which means that I can't afford the*

time it takes to confuse you."

"So confusion is *what activates your quirk!"* Ochako had yelled.

"No…" Shinso had somehow gotten even *more* nervous. *"It's verbal response."*

She'd had to spend the rest of the morning coaxing him to talk to her, which was mildly frustrating, but she understood why. People had probably avoided answering his questions in the past, but he hadn't taken control of her when they'd talked before, so why would he now? Plus, it made it significantly easier for her to stay put, because as soon as Shinso's phone gave them the notification, he just said her name like it was a question and all she had to do was say yes so he could order her not to teleport. It felt so cool that she was in the know that it almost made up for her not being able to stop on her own. Almost.

As soon as Gunhead released them for the evening, one of the other interns, a second year named Shindou from Ketsubutsu, immediately called out for everyone's attention, "Alright, guys, dinnertime! Who wants to go out to eat?"

She looked over at Shinso who shrugged, "I could eat."

"Let's walk together!" one of the guys turned to her, "And no cheating. You can't teleport to get there faster."

Ochako rolled her eyes, "You know that's not how my quirk works. I'd need an anchor point already at the restaurant."

"Still, don't worry about her falling behind." Shinso smirked. "You remember how strong she is from when she made you eat the mat earlier."

The guy groaned as everyone else laughed and Ochako fell into step with the group, Shinso right beside her. He was good at making sure the other boys didn't make fun of her, but she was also proving that she deserved to be there in her own right as well. Sure, she still lost more spars than she won, but she did win. It was a good feeling.

"So…" Shindo slowed down so he was walking beside them. "What are you guys gonna do when you get back to UA?"

Shinso shrugged, "Probably make sure my kidnappers don't destroy more than about 30% of the school."

“Um…” Shindou gave him a vaguely concerned look. “That’s...good? What about you, Uraraka?”

“Oh, you know.” She gestured vaguely. “Don’t do drugs, stay in school...well, that one probably won’t work very well, actually.”

Shinso tried and failed to hold back a snort, “Yeah, she’ll probably just be here and there. She gets around, you know?”

Shindou sighed and shook his head, “I don’t know what I expected. Do you guys have other friends? Are they just as bad as you two are?”

“Oh, my kidnappers definitely are.” Shinso nodded. “And we’re working on corrupting the rest.”

“Are you kidding? Half of them are already corrupted.” Ochako laughed, not really registering when Shinso got a text. “I mean, last month, Mina pulled this prank where…”

A wave of nausea hit her, followed by a wave of frustration when she realized she didn’t have a clue where she was, “Dang it.”

Mina was having a blast. Yoroi Musha was way more dignified than she was used to, but it made him fun to play off of! Plus, she was learning a lot about being a hero, although she wasn’t afraid to admit that she was just a little bit jealous of Todoroki. He got to meet a cute cat *and* go viral? Seriously?! How was that fair?

They were half an hour into their evening patrol when her phone rang. *Loudly*.

She flinched and looked up at Yoroi sheepishly, “I, uh, guess I forgot to put it on silent?”

“Hmm…” He had a small smile on his face and she almost deflated in relief when she realized he wasn’t angry, just amused. “It’s a slow night, so you can go ahead and answer it. Perhaps it’s important. A hero should always be reachable.”

Mina nodded and hurried to answer the phone, “Pinky here! What can I do for ya?”

To her surprise, Shinso’s voice greeted her on the other end, “Is Uraraka with you?”

“Uraraka?” Mina frowned. “Aren’t you both interning with Gunhead?

Shouldn't she be with you?"

"Theoretically." Shinso groaned. "Ugh, can you just take a look around and tell me if you see her anywhere?"

"Um, sure?" Mina pulled the receiver away and turned back to Yoroi, who was looking at her with one eyebrow raised in question. "It's a friend of mine. He was asking if another friend was with me."

Yoroi frowned, "Are they interning in this city?"

"No, they're about an hour away." Mina answered as she started scanning the street. "So I'm not sure why she would be here, but...oh! Ochako! Over here!"

Ochako was still in workout clothes, but she was grinning as she jogged toward them, "Hey Mina! I was wondering when I was gonna run into you!"

"What are you doing here?" Mina asked, giving her a quick hug. "I thought you were interning with Gunhead!"

"Oh, I am!" Ochako assured her. "It's just that things have been super weird lately, but enough about me, how are you?"

"I'm...good?" Mina said. "I mean, it's super fun and I'm learning a lot, but, uh...are you allowed to be so far away from your agency?"

"Oh, this is *nothing.* " Uraraka muttered. "I mean, technically no, but again, everything's been super weird."

"Yeah…" Mina frowned. "I was just so surprised when Shinso called...Oh wait! I totally forgot to tell him I found you!"

She held the forgotten phone up to her ear, glancing away from Uraraka for a second, "Hey Shinso? Yeah, I found...her? Wait, where...?"

"Oh, she's back." Shinso said suddenly. "Well, down the street, but close enough. Thanks Mina! See you later!"

"You're...welcome?" Mina let the phone fall after he hung up. "He said she's back with him?"

Yoroi looked just as confused as she felt, "I thought you said they were interning an hour away?"

“They are…” Mina looked at the spot Uraraka had been just a second before. “Super weird.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.26.2021

Decisions

Chapter Summary

Internships are over, back to school!

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I’m gonna miss you!” Melissa gave him a big hug. “It’s been fun having another quirkless person around.”

Izuku sniffed, “I’m sorry! I’ll try to come back as soon as possible, I promise!”

“We better.” Mei threatened. “I’m ruined for any lesser labs! How am I gonna survive without a micro plasma fusion printer?!”

Dr. Shield held back a smile, “You can always make your own.”

A wide grin spread across her face, “I like the way you think!”

Izuku wiped his tears away and shook his head, “You know that Powerloader is going to hate you for that, right?”

“Nah, old Iron Claws will be fine.” Dr. Shield said. “He secretly likes the chaotic ones, he just likes to complain to hide how proud he is.”

An automated voice echoed through the airport, *“Last boarding for Tokyo, Last boarding for Tokyo.”*

Izuku sighed, “Do we really have to go?”

“Yes!” Melissa laughed. “You have to run field tests with Uravity and tell us how she likes the earrings, remember?”

“Oh right!” Mei grabbed Izuku’s hand and started dragging him away. “Come on, Izu-kun! The sooner we get on the plane, the sooner we can get back to testing our babies!”

“I don’t think that’s exactly how it works, Mei-chan.” Izuku chuckled. He turned as best he could to wave goodbye to the shields. “Bye! We’ll

be back!”

“Hey Shindig, do you know why they wanted us to come straight to the school?” Ochako asked. “I mean, doesn’t it make more sense to drop off our stuff at home first?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “I think it’s timing. For me, my adults are already at work, but you don’t live with your parents, so I don’t know why they’re having you tag along with me.”

Ochako sighed, “Well, it would be a lot more annoying if I couldn’t make our bags weightless. Do you think they’ll let us leave them in the office?”

“I’m sure they will.” Hitoshi nodded. “But if not, then my kidnappers can probably stash them in the tunnels for us, so it’s not a big deal.”

Ochako rolled her eyes, “You’re forgetting that I don’t know how to get into those.”

“You don’t have to.” Hitoshi gave her a mischievous look. “All you have to do is focus on the right person and you’ll pop right in!”

Ochako shook her head, but couldn’t hold back a smile. Their nightly games of hide and seek had become the highlight of their internship, and Gunhead had gotten them all mochi last night to celebrate Ochako getting in the same room as him. Sure, that room had been the training room, which was the largest room in the agency, but *she’d done it!* Next, she might even be able to stop teleporting randomly without Hitohsi’s help!

Aizawa and Mic met them at the door and Mic lit up as soon as he saw them coming, “Hey, little listeners! We’re glad to see you’re ok! We were a little worried there for a minute!”

“Uraraka, give your bags to Shinso.” Aizawa ordered. “You can put them in Midoriya’s workroom for now, or the teacher’s lounge, I don’t care. Hizashi’ll help you. Now hurry up, everyone’s waiting for us.”

“Everyone?” Uraraka left her bags floating and hurried to catch up with Aizawa, who was already striding down the hall. “What’s going on?”

Aizawa raised an eyebrow, “You really thought that you could disappear for half a day and not get a call home to your parents?

We're having a parent teacher conference."

Ochako's eyes widened, "Mom and Dad are…" she felt gravity shift and she was suddenly down the hall from the principal's office, "here?"

She grinned and started running forward, only to stop. Was she supposed to wait for Aizawa? That would make sense, but then again, they knew that she could teleport and so it wouldn't be a surprise that she'd gotten there faster. The decision was made for her when Nedzu's door opened invitingly. It looked like they were expecting her.

She ran straight into her dad's arms, "Dad! What are you doing here?!"

Dad kissed the top of her head, "I just needed to see that you were all right with my own two eyes, Ochako. You really gave us a scare!"

"Sorry." Ochako smiled sheepishly. "My quirk kinda…"

"They are well aware of the changes to your quirk." Nedzu piped up. "Or quirks as the case may be."

Ochako froze in panic. They *knew?* But All Might had said that it was a secret and she wasn' allowed to tell anyone…someone cleared their throat and she whirled around to see All Might in the corner, still in his smaller form, with a bloody handkerchief in his hand.

"My apologies, young Uraraka." He said. "I had attempted to keep the knowledge of One for All in as small a circle as possible, but when you disappeared, well…"

"The main concern was that you had been kidnapped." Aizawa finished, finally walking through the door and closing it behind him. "All Might has plenty of enemies, many of which would jump at the chance to target his quirk while it was vulnerable with a new, untrained holder."

"We decided that telling your parents was the only call we could make in good conscience." Nedzu explained. "If you *had* been kidnapped because you were holding One for All, they deserved to know why their daughter had disappeared."

"We deserved to know before the decision was made." Mom said sternly. "Ochako is a teenager! You can't expect her to make such a big decision without even being allowed to talk to anyone about it!"

All Might hung his head, “I see that now, and once again, I apologize to both you and to young Uraraka for putting her in that position. It was unfair of me and I was blind to how the secrecy would impact her decision. I also had no idea how drastically One for All would affect her quirk. I was under the impression that I was giving her a simple strength enhancer, not…well, all this to say that I would like to make this right.”

He took a deep breath and turned to face Ochako, “It was unfair of me to push this quirk onto you with no explanation or understanding of the consequences. So I would like to offer you the opportunity to choose if you truly want this quirk. I will understand completely if you decide that it is too much trouble and give it back to me.”

“No.” Ochako hardly even waited for him to finish the sentence before she gave her answer. “Absolutely not.”

Everyone looked a bit taken aback, and All Might coughed into his handkerchief again, “Uh, are you sure? You can take all the time you need to think about…”

“My answer is no.” Ochako repeated firmly. “One for All is mine now and there is absolutely no way you are getting it back.”

There was a long moment of shocked silence before Nedzu chuckled, “Well, it seems you are quite determined, young lady. Would you mind giving us an explanation for your decision?”

“I didn’t want this quirk.” Ochako answered plainly. “But then it gave me a challenge and if I can’t rise to that then I don’t want to call myself a hero. Forgive my language, but I have worked too damn hard to throw in the towel. I am going to make this quirk my bitch and use it to save as many people as humanly possible, and then I am going to move back home with my parents and save on rent by teleporting to school and *you can’t stop me.”*

There was a beat and then her dad started laughing, “Well, you heard her. Our Ochako is gonna win this! The quirk stays!”

“How long do you think it’ll be before you move home?” Mom asked. “Oh no, honey, we’ve been using her room as an extra office! Where are we gonna put everything?”

“I’m sure you’ll figure it out.” Nedzu said with a smile. “And please, let us know if there’s anything we can do to help you with this transition. We’ve already contacted an old mentor of All Might’s to

give Uraraka some remedial quirk counselling and he is well aware of the special circumstances surrounding One for All, and between him and our support students, I expect that we'll have her popping over to see you in a few weeks!"

"Is that all?" Ochako asked. "Can I go to class now?"

Aizawa jerked his head toward the door, "Fine. And tell Shinso that next time he leaves for a week, he should clean his room before he goes."

"Ok?" Ochako said slowly. "Oh, and I might be a little late for class. I have to drop by and see his kidnappers first."

Aizawa groaned as she disappeared.

Izuku reached out and grabbed Mei's hands, "Stop. They'll work perfectly and Uraraka will love them."

"I *know*… " Mei bit her lip. "But there's still so many ways that they can be better and…"

"And you'll have plenty of time to perfect the design later." Izuku said patiently. "But even the current design will help her so much."

Mei smiled, "I guess you're right. I need to…"

She was cut off by a short scream out in the main labs and they both rushed out of Izuku's workroom to see the rest of the class looked at Uraraka in shock as Kohaku fumed, "What the fuck?! What did you two do?"

"Oh, Gravity Girl!" Mei grinned widely as she pulled her into Izuku's room by the arm. "Your control's getting better! You like pink, right? I looked at your costume and the accents were pink, so we assumed you liked it."

"Yep!" Uraraka nodded, rolling with the weird questions like a pro, but then again, Izuku assumed she was used to weirdness at this point.

"Good! Here!" Mei shoved a jewelry box into her hands. "Happy birthday!"

Uraraka shook her head, "Still not my birthday, but these are the tracking earrings, right? Woah! Are they moving?!"

“Yep!” Izuku said. “Be careful. Melissa suggested using gyroscopes, so yeah, they shouldn’t get caught on anything, but it’s still not a good idea to just stick your fingers in them or something.”

“They’re so cute!” Uraraka gushed, putting them in. “And they’ll track my warping, right?”

“Right.” Mei said. “And Izu-kun wrote the program, so he can track your location and send a ping to Extra-Credit-Kun’s phone when you jump. That way we won’t lose you again!”

“That’s more of a training wheel feature.” Izuku explained. “But, yeah, we tested them and they should beep when the gravity around you shifts too much, which will warn you of any incoming warps!”

“Thank you so much!” Uraraka pulled them both into a hug. “This means so much and it’ll be super helpful. You two…I don’t think I would have gotten through this without you. I probably would have just given it back by this point if I’d gone to anyone else on my first jump. See you later, bye!”

There was a quiet chirping sound and there was a brief light that surrounded her like an aurora before she disappeared, probably using Shinso as an anchor again. Izuku frowned and turned to Mei, “What did she mean by *give it back* ?”

Hitoshi held back a smile as Ochako ran into the room two seconds before the bell. Mina immediately abandoned her attempts at interrogating him and ran over to her, only for Aizawa to banish them all to their seats before she could get a word out. Mina pouted and shot a glare at Hitoshi, who just shrugged unapologetically. Sure, he probably *could* have explained how and why she’d gotten a surprise visit in the middle of their internships, but that wasn’t nearly as fun as saying *you’ll have to ask Ochako yourself.*

“All right, class. Welcome back. Most of you did well.” Aizawa said. “Now, today’s lesson is going to be about…”

“Sensei?” Yaomomo’s hand shot into the air. “Do you know where Iida is? He’s never late for class, especially not on the first day.”

Aizawa sighed and Hitoshi frowned as an unfamiliar chirping sound echoed around the room. It took him a half second too long to realize what that meant, “Ochako! Wait…and she’s gone again. Oh well, I guess she’ll say hi to Iida for us.”

The classroom erupted into confused whispers and it took a full ten seconds for Aizawa to glare them all into submission, “Isn’t it your job to make sure that doesn’t happen, Shinso?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “Well, you know her. Ocha-go….Ocha-going…Ocha-gone.”

Aizawa groaned, “Well then, we were trying to keep this under wraps, considering that it’s a miracle that the media hasn’t picked it up yet, but since Uraraka is going to figure it out, I may as well make you aware that there was an *incident* during Iida’s internship.”

“You mean the Nomu attack?” Todoroki asked. “But that *was* on the news.”

“No.” Aizawa began. “It happened around the same time, but…”

Hitoshi’s phone buzzed and he checked the message to see that he’d been sent Ochako’s new location, “Wait, where is…Iida’s in the hospital?!”

Aizawa sighed, “And *that,* students, is why today’s lesson is on the dangers of vigilantism.”

How in the world had Iida ended up in the hospital?

Ochako tried to look like she knew where she was going as she tried to figure out what room he was in. He had to be here somewhere, right? But at least now she could tell Yaomomo why he wasn’t in class. Being in the hospital kinda came with a free late pass.

“Hey, shouldn’t you be in school?” A guy in a wheelchair called out to her. “I mean, UA started again today, right?”

Ochako nodded, “Don’t worry, my teacher knows where I am…or at least he should be able to figure it out. Um, I’m actually here visiting a friend but, uh…ok, this is silly, but I forgot the room number. Do you know if there’s any nurses around who would know?”

“The nurses’ station is just around the corner, but I’ve been here long enough that I might be able to help.” The guy smiled, the movement making his bandages shift slightly. “I’m Tensei Iida, who are you looking for?”

“Tensei Iida?” Ochako sighed in relief. “Oh, you might be the perfect

person to ask then. I'm looking for my classmate, *Tenya* Iida. Are you related?"

Tensei's face fell, "He...he's my brother. Um, you didn't call ahead, did you?"

"Uh, not really, no." Ochako grimaced. "Coming here was kinda impulsive."

"Well, I'm sorry, but you just missed him." Tensei said kindly. "The doctors just took him back for surgery about a half hour ago."

"Surgery?" Ochako's eyes widened. "What happened?"

Tensei looked at her in confusion, "You don't know?"

"Uh…" Ochako took a second to think of a better excuse than *I only know something's wrong because I can't control my quirk* . "Aizawa told us he was in the hospital, but didn't tell us any details. So?"

Tensei stared at the floor, "It's my fault. If I hadn't been so weak and gotten hurt.."

"I'm sure Iida doesn't blame you." Ochako assured him.

Tensei smiled sadly, "Thanks, but I don't think that matters much. Tenya...well, I guess he wanted revenge. He went after the hero killer."

Ochako didn't know what to say. The hero killer. Honestly, he was lucky he was only in surgery and not in a box, "Oh."

"Yeah." Tensei gave a small chuckle. "He was lucky to escape alive, but the hero killer targeted a lot of major arteries, mostly in his arm and shoulder. The paramedics were able to save his life, but...well, he was never going to be able to use that arm again…"

Ochako panicked, reaching out to Iida again with her quirk. Maybe she could jump close enough to the operating room, she could...well, she didn't know what she'd do, but it didn't matter, because no matter how hard she looked for it, Iida's familiar gravity signature was *gone.*

Tensei was grim, "We had to make the decision to amputate."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 2, 2021

Something

Chapter Summary

New projects!

Chapter Notes

Art!
A true gentlebee

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

By the time Ochako walked into the classroom again, the mood was a lot more somber. Aizawa just nodded to her as she found her seat and she nodded back, ignoring the curious stares of their classmates for the rest of class. As soon as the bell rang, Hitoshi made a beeline toward her and put his hand on her shoulder, “Hey, Ocha. Are you ok? Did you see him?”

Ochako shook her head, “He was in surgery, so I couldn’t go in. But...Hitoshi, I can’t feel him anymore.”

Hitoshi furrowed his eyebrows, “What are you talking about.”

“My quirk.” Ochako had tears in her eyes as she looked at him. “They had to cut off his arm, Shindig. It threw off his gravity and I can’t anchor to him anymore.”

Hitoshi didn’t say anything, just pulled her into a hug, “I’m so sorry, Ochako.”

“I…” Ochako buried her face in his shoulder. “I could have helped him. If I just had better control over this quirk...I even *thought* about him and if I hadn’t been so exhausted.”

“Then you would have been exhausted when you got there and you would have been hurt too.” Hitoshi reminded her firmly. “You just barely developed this ability, Ocha. Don’t blame yourself for not being perfect. Remember what Mei says about failed experiments?”

Ochako sniffed, “They’re what our successes are built on.”

“Exactly.” Hitoshi smiled. “Now, come on. Everyone is freaking out over you disappearing. I would probably just let them suffer, but you’re too nice for that.”

“Yeah, I should give them some sort of explanation, at least.” Ochako said tiredly. “Wait, did we ever tell Mina how I got there?”

“Nope.” Hitoshi smirked. “And I didn’t explain anything this morning before you got there. Like I said, I personally would just let them suffer.”

Ochako hit him in the arm, “Don’t be mean, Shindig. They’re our friends, and eventually, I’m hopefully going to learn how to use it in a fight, so they deserve to know. Not everyone can just get away with confusing people constantly like you can.”

“Meh, not everyone has the support of vent gremlins.” Hitoshi shrugged.

He took a few steps before he noticed that Ochako wasn’t beside him and he sighed, making sure she wasn’t behind him before switching directions and heading toward the support classrooms. This was gonna take some adjustment.

Mei was pouting. At the beginning of class, Powerloader had gone over how their final exams were going to work, which was more of a final project, not that she’d expected anything different, but it was supposed to be something that was going to challenge them and even three different explosions hadn’t been enough to get the creative juices flowing.

She almost wanted to go pester Izu-kun about it, but he was so deep in his program that he hadn’t even heard Powerloader telling him class was over, so she didn’t want to bother him. If only she could count Gravity Girl’s earrings as her final, they’d be perfect, but then she’d be bored for the rest of the semester. She just wanted a baby to work on!

Almost as if on cue, Gravity Girl herself slammed the door to the labs open, “Mei-chan! I need your help!”

“Oh, thank god.” Mei swiveled around in her chair to face her. “Please tell me that you need a baby!”

“I don’t.” Ochako said, and Mei made to turn around in her seat, “but one of my classmates *definitely* does.”

Mei immediately grabbed a pen and a sketchbook, “I could kiss you right now.”

“Oh, you can save that for Midoriya.” Ochako teased. “But seriously, it’s about Iida.”

“Iida...Iida...Iida…” Mei tapped her chin with the pencil. “Oh! Engine legs! He’s like a living cyborg!”

“That’s the one!” Ochako grinned, but her expression fell after a moment. “I was actually hoping there might be a way to make him *more* cyborg, if you think that’s possible.”

“Uraraka-kun, don’t encourage her.” Izu-kun walked out of his workroom, rubbing his eyes. “I already have to talk her out of making cyborgs every other week.”

“But it’s for a good cause this time!” Ochako insisted. “One of my classmates...he got injured during his internship.”

“Oh no.” Izu-kun looked like he was about to start sympathy crying. “I’m so sorry.”

Ochako nodded grimly, “He was attacked by the hero killer and lost his arm. It’s a career ending injury, unless…”

“Unless we make him a new one!” Mei immediately started scribbling down ideas as fast as she could. “I need everything. Measurements, quirk limitations, nickel allergies. Izu-kun! I get to make a cyborg!”

Izu-kun, the killjoy, just rolled his eyes and grabbed her hand, “Consent, Mei-chan. We need to talk to Iida and see if he’s even interested in continuing hero work first before you make him our new pet project.”

Mei pouted, “Ok, but if he says yes, *then* can I make him a cyborg?”

"Yes," Izuku gave her a sly smile, “Then you can make him a cyborg.”

Mineta ignored the glares the girls were sending his way, not really caring if he came across as oblivious or just straight up rude. Either would make him underestimate him and think he was paying attention to their bodies instead of their words.

“And then she disappeared just like this morning, and Shinso just *hung up on me!”* Mina cried. “The audacity! And now nobody will give me a

single ounce of explanation!"

"Hmm." Tsu tapped her chin thoughtfully. "Maybe Midoriya and Hatsume would know what's going on?"

Jiro rolled her eyes, "Just because they act like cryptids doesn't mean they're all knowing. If it's a quirk thing, and let's be honest it probably is, then you'd have better luck asking Cheat Code."

Mineta perked up.

"Did you see Midoirya at the sports festival?" Hagakure asked incredulously. "He's almost as smart as Cheat Code is, and *way* easier to contact."

"He *is* Nedzu's personal student." Yaoyorozu mused. "So I doubt he has anything less than spectacular intelligence. But Cheat Code is a professional analyst and doesn't Midoriya focus on creating inventions with Hatsume? They both interned on I-Island, after all."

"They were the ones interning on I-Island?!" Mineta blurted out.

Jiro glared at him, "Don't act like you actually care. You're only interested because Hatsume has big boobs."

"And she refers to inventing as making babies!" Hagakure added helpfully.

Mineta filed that information away for later to help him identify Hatsume just in case he couldn't swing an introduction. And if she and Midoriya were always talked about as a pair, that meant he was probably her boyfriend or something and if he found one, the other wouldn't be far behind. Sure, All for One had said Cheat Code was probably a second or third year, but they *were* looking for a student, so it was still worth investigating. Plus, Nedzu wouldn't dream of taking on a personal student unless they were almost smarter than he was, so even if this Midoriya guy wasn't Cheat Code, All for One would still want to know about him. Who knew? Maybe he'd find some other way to make use of him.

"You!" Mina's shreik knocked him out of his thoughts and he saw Uraraka walking toward them with Shinso following a few seconds behind. Mina pointed her finger at them accusingly, "You have so much explaining to do, young lady!"

Uraraka giggled, "Yeah, I guess I do, don't I?"

Mineta inched a little closer, only to be stopped by Jiro's glare when he got a little too close to Yaoyorozu, "Buzz off, you little pervert."

Mineta gulped as Shinso turned to look at him, a bored expression on his face, "Is this guy bothering you?"

Yaoyorozu blushed, "N-no, well, I mean, but it's fine…"

"Yes." Jiro cut in.

Shinso hummed and stared at him far too intensely for a few seconds until Mineta was shuffling in place, "Well? What do you have to say for yourself?"

"Why would I ever explain myself to a villain like you?" Mineta whined. "You could have any girl you wanted with that quirk of yours, and you wouldn't even have the balls to tell them how it works…"

He trailed off as his brain clouded over and everyone's voices sounded suddenly far away. Shinso didn't stop staring at him, "Go away. Don't wake up until you're at least three halls away from here."

"Thanks a million Shinso!" MIna said as Mineta was forced to stop walking away.

"Yeah." Uraraka added. "We owe you one."

"If only you could teleport *other* people with your quirk, Ocha." Shinso said. "But, whatever, my quirk's perfect for getting rid of creeps."

If Mineta had control over his facial expressions, he would have been grinning. A teleporter in class 1A? Now *that* was valuable information.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 09, 2021

Apologies, I had originally mistakenly put the sixth, but that probably won't be doable at this point.

Ingenium

Chapter Summary

Every hero has a legacy.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Limedoodle
Blackwinged_Angel
Avroux

Memes!
X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“No. Absolutely not.” Izuku put his foot down. “You can’t bring explosive materials into a hospital Mei-chan!”

“But I want to start testing as soon as possible!” Mei pouted. “It’s nothing *too dangerous,* just a teeny, tiny micro…”

“It’s a hospital, Mei-chan.” Izuku interrupted. “Everything is dangerous.”

“I’m sure they’d let Bakugo in if he came to visit.” Mei grumbled. “And he’s the definition of explosive.”

“He’s also a person, Mei-chan.” Izuku sighed. “So still no.”

“But I already brought it!” Mei whined. “I can’t just leave it outside!”

“Make Ocha take it back to the school.” Hitoshi suggested. “I think Sero had detention today, so he should still be at school. She can use him as an anchor point, then take whatever you need back to the lab.”

Ochako nodded, “Yeah! It’ll be good practice.”

Mei glared at them before giving in and shoving her bag into Ochako’s hands, “Fine! But be quick about it!”

Ochako grinned and Izuku reached for his notebook. He’d really only seen that weird light around her a few times now, since most of the time she was disappearing too fast for him to get a good look, but it

seemed to appear whenever she was searching for an anchor, which made Izuku completely nerd out with questions. How did she tell anchors apart? Could she train her quirk to figure out how far away they were or even where? If she used two anchors, could she theoretically jump to a point between them?

There was a beep from the tracking earrings and Hitoshi whistled as Ochako popped out of existence, “I keep thinking that’ll get less impressive, but so far, no luck. It was really freaky the first time, though. Now it’s just cool.”

Izuku frowned, “It’s weird that it came on so suddenly. I would have expected her quirk to get stronger gradually, which means there would have been signs and then she could have trained herself to jump, rather than jumping and having to train herself to not.”

“Well, she *has* been pushing her quirk a lot.” Mei said. “Would that affect it at all?”

“There *is* a trend of hero students’ quirks changing while they train.” Izuku acknowledged. “But those normally happen during the second year when training gets more intense in preparation for licensing exams, not when they’ve barely started training.”

“I think Izuku might be onto something.” Hitoshi butt in. “Eraser’s been acting super weird about her quirk too, like there’s some sort of secret about it or something. But then again, he’s also been pretty frustrated with All Might and *that* seems to be normal, so it might be nothing. I’m kinda still learning how to read him and Mic. What with internships and everything, me and my adults haven’t really just had time to hang out at home, you know?”

Mei leaned into his personal space and looked him in the eye, “But it’s better, right? They weren’t lying about protecting you and making sure you had a better place to live than that stupid foster home, right?”

Hitoshi nodded, “They actually *encourage* me to talk at home, which is nice, but I never know how to respond when they ask me how quirk training is going. I’ve never had any adults be genuinely interested before. I fthey asked, they were just testing the waters to make sure I wasn’t going to murder them in their sleep or soething.”

“Who are you going to murder?” Ochako had popped into the middle of the conversation. “I hope they deserve it.”

“They would have.” Hitoshi assured her. “But don’t worry about it too much. You ready to introduce robo-boy to his new kidnappers.”

“Hitoshi!” Izuku squawked. “You can’t just call us kidnappers in everyday conversation!”

“Why not?” Hitoshi said innocently. “Mei-chan calls things her babies all the time.”

“I’m pretty sure that makes it worse.” Ochako giggled. “If you’re not careful, people are going to think you two steal people’s babies or something.”

“I would never steal another person’s baby!” Mei said indignantly. “It’s much more fun to make them myself!”

The rest of them laughed as Izuku groaned loudly, “Can we just go now? We don’t want to keep Iida waiting.”

“Yeah! Let’s go!” Ochako led the way. “And can we just appreciate that we just talked about Iida and I didn’t immediately disappear?!”

“Good work, Gravity Girl!” Mei clapped her on the back. “A little more control and I’ll be able to make you such awesome babies!”

Izuku grabbed his notebook again, “What are you doing differently? If we can figure it out…”

Ochako shook her head, “It won’t really work that well for everything. Right now, I’m just reminding the stupid quirk that Iida is right there, so I don’t need to go to him. That’s about it, but I’m not usually close enough for that trick to work.”

“Still pretty good practice.” Hitoshi shrugged as they arrived at Iida’s room. “So…should we just knock?”

Mei was already barging through the door before he could even finish his question.

Mineta may have known exactly how he’d gotten here, but that didn’t mean he had to like it. Seriously, how had All for One stayed in power this long if he thought it was a good idea to send a first year hero student against a serial killer? What kind of stupid plan was that?

He wasn’t actually going to *fight* the serial killer. Unlike Shigaraki’s beloved Sensei, Mineta wasn’t an idiot. If he faced Stain head on, he

was gonna end up like Iida or probably even worse, so no thank you. That didn't mean he was giving up, though. There was more than one way to skin a cat.

He looked around the alleyway one more time, making sure all of his traps were in place before taking out his burner phone. He'd stolen Mt. Lady's login information for the hero network during his internship, not that b1ga$$Lady was a very secure password to begin with, but it gave him access to a lot of the investigation files he wouldn't have been able to access as a student and allowed him to make some connections that made him doubt the competency of the Hero Commission.

The police had already picked up on the pattern of four heroes per city. He'd moved on after Hosu and only had one attack so far, so Mineta wasn't too concerned about missing him, especially because of the pattern the police had missed. With the exception of Ingenium, who seemed to have simply stumbled into him, there was usually a call on the hero network a few minutes before the hero was attacked, which meant that Stain was either looking for crimes and chasing them to the heroes or, more likely, listening to police and hero scanners to find and trap his targets. All Mineta needed to turn that tactic against him was a little bit of bait.

He dialed the police and took a few shallow breaths so that it sounded like he was hyperventilating by the time the operator responded, "Please! Please, you gotta help me!"

"Kid, take a deep breath with me, ok? What's going on?"

"I...I don't know!" Mineta choked out. "I was just walking home from school, and i have to pass through his alley…"

"Is it a villain?"

"I…" Mineta looked around the empty alley. "I think so, yeah."

"Just one?"

"I think so?" Mineta answered. "I don't think the guy on the ground is a villain."

"Are you safe?"

"I think so…" Mineta had to pinch himself to keep himself from laughing, "Oh no, he's coming this way!"

“We’re sending the nearest hero to your location, stay hidden and stay on the line…”

Mineta rolled his eyes and slammed the phone on the ground, stomping on it for good measure. According to the hero network, the nearest hero was some D-lister by the name of Slugger who had a reputation for leaving the difficult fights to other heroes while he warmed the bench, which should be a tempting enough target to bait his *real* target.

He used some of his balls to scale the wall and watch the chaos from the roof. All that was left to do was wait for a bite.

Tenya stared at the sheets and tried to ignore Tensei’s disappointed glare from the corner. He had just about as much success with that as he had with ignoring his parents' tears the past few days, which was to say practically none. Why had he let his anger get the best of him like that? Why hadn’t he talked to someone or thought through how it would affect his parents to have not one, but both of their sons lose all chances of being a hero within two weeks of each other? Why had he been so prideful as to think he could actually take on Stain?

Tensei sighed, “How are you feeling?”

“Strange.” Tenya responded. “My arm hurts.”

Tensei frowned, “I thought Recovery Girl was able to repair the damage in that one. Maybe there’s something wrong. We can call the doctors…”

“Not that one.” Tenya cut him off. “I think they called it phantom pain.”

“Oh.” Tensei said softly. “I’m sorry.”

“It is not your fault that my stupidity got me injured.” Tenya said firmly.

“I should have been there for you.” Tensei looked like he was going to start crying again. “I shouldn’t have put so much pressure on you to be the next Ingenium and now…”

Tenya didn’t have any response to that. Ingenium was gone. There were no more Iida sons to carry on the name. Generations of heroes, cut short by a monster with a katana. What a legacy.

Tensei opened his mouth to say something, but was interrupted by the door bursting open. A girl with pink hair that he vaguely recognized from the sports festival rushed in, "So! You're the boy that lost the arm! Let me see!"

Another student with green hair ran after her in a panic, "Mei-chan! You can't just say things like that!"

"Why not, Izu-kun?" Mei asked. "If I'm going to be making him a new arm, then I need to see the situation!"

"It's a sensitive topic, Mei-chan!" Izu-kun said. "We don't even know if he still wants to be a hero, much less if he's willing to…"

"Who are you?" Tenya's brain was still catching up as he spluttered. "And your companion is quite right, it *is* quite rude to burst in here like that."

To his surprise, Uraraka rushed into the room as well, "I am so sorry, Iida. I know Mei and Izuku can be a bit much the first time you meet them, but I…"

Tenya's brain finished buffering and his eyes widened, "Wait, why do you want to know if I still want to be a hero?"

"So we can help you, silly!" Mei had pulled a tape measure from nowhere and Tenya flinched as she started measuring his shoulder. "Are you allergic to any metals? How well do you respond to radioactive materials?"

Shinso walked in and for some reason, in contrast to Uraraka's arrival, his arrival made complete sense. These two must be the support students, Midoriya and Hatsume, that helped him win the sports festival, then. It still didn't make any of this make any more sense, but at least someone was here who knew how to navigate the chaos.

"They want to make you their new project, just like Ocha and I have been." Shinso said. "I'd recommend just rolling with it...uh, no offense, wheelchair guy."

"None taken." Tensei said calmly. "But what would this *project* entail exactly?"

"Cyborg hero!" Mei shot him a manic grin. "Half man! Half groundbreaking Hatsume tech!"

Midoriya sighed, “What she means is that she wants to make him a new arm. A lot of heroes have managed to continue their careers after losing a limb, Ectoplasm being the prime example, but it’ll be difficult, and I’m sure there’s a lot of different issues, so don’t feel obligated to…”

“I can still be a hero?” Tenya asked softly. “But I…”

“Well, you’re still going to get into trouble for the vigilantism, obviously.” Shinso said. “But you’re still a student, so enough community service and a probation period *should* be enough to put you back on track, if you can manage to get Nedzu on your side.”

“Do you want lasers in your fingers?” Mei asked, then nodded quickly. “I’m giving you lasers in your fingers.”

From the corner, Tensei cleared his throat, “Hatsume, was it? What do you know about modifying wheelchairs?”

Mei grinned and Midoriya started scribbling something down in his notebook. Tenya felt vaguely terrified, but also oddly hopeful for the first time since the sports festival. What had he just signed up for?

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 16, 2021

Trapper

Chapter Summary

Stain vs. Mineta

Chapter Notes

Art!
Chicax
Tess
The biggest fangirl

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mineta easily blended into the shadows as he watched Slugger hesitantly scope out the alley. He hung back for a long moment before he realized no one was there and he relaxed, stomping into the alley in frustration. He walked around for about thirty seconds before he huffed and activated his comm, “Yeah, It's a bust. Prank call probably. No, there’s no one. Yeah, I’ll be back soon. Might go get lunch on the way, or something though.”

He cut the call and muttered under his breath, “Stupid kids. Wasting my time. Could’ve been…”

He trailed off and Mineta grinned as he followed Slugger’s gaze and caught a glimpse of Stain’s scarf before he disappeared into the shadows again. It looked like his prey had taken the bait after all! Good, it would have been annoying to have to go through all this work again.

“W-who’s there?” Slugger put on a brave face. “I’m warning you, I’m a pro hero, so you don’t want to mess with me! Come out where I can see you!”

A can clattered behind him and Mineta rolled his eyes as Slugger turned toward the sound. Really? Falling for the oldest trick in the book? Society really had too high of expectations if *this* was what they called a hero.

The moment Slugger turned his back, Stain made his move. He struck

hard and fast like a viper, stabbing Slugger's arm and licking the blade before the hero even had a chance to return the blow, "Another false hero for me to cull. How lucky."

Luck had absolutely nothing to do with it, but Mineta wasn't about to criticize what a serial killer said to his victims before they died. He just needed to wait until Slugger was out of the way, then he could make his move. Just a little longer…

Unless, of course, Stain started monologuing, "It's cowards like you who are corrupting the word *hero.* You use your abilities for your own selfish gain rather than dedicating them to saving others. It's a tragedy that you were even able to get your license in the first place."

It was a good thing that Slugger's agency thought he was out to lunch, because Stain sure was taking his sweet time getting rid of this guy. After another minute or so of rambling about the evils of hero society and fake heroes in particular, Stain finally, *finally,* got around to actually doing his job and raised his Katana.

"You're a fake and don't deserve to live." Stain declared seriously. "I will stain myself, but at least the world will be clean of your filth."

Mineta tried not to flinch as the blade came down. It wasn't the first time he had watched someone die, and he was sure it was far from the last, so why should he let something like that phase him? He had chosen to work with the villains and this world was a dangerous game. Slugger just wasn't playing on the same level as the rest of them were.

Stain stood and started to wipe off his knife on what was left of the hero's costume and Mineta took that as his cue. He pulled the rope beside him, dropping a net that had dozens of his balls stuck to it down onto where Stain was standing. Stain couldn't fight heroes the way he did if he didn't have good reflexes, but he also wasn't prepared to fight Mineta's quirk, he didn't even know what it was. So while he *mostly* managed to dodge in time, one of the balls caught on the loose fabric of his pant leg and he would have cut it off if Mineta hadn't immediately dropped two more nets on him. Better safe than sorry.

Once he was sure that Stain was mostly immobilized and his knives were just as stuck as he was, Mineta used the balls he'd scattered around the alley to bounce down so that he was standing behind Stain, just outside of his field of vision, and pulled out his phone, "Kurogiri? Tell Sensei that I finished his little assignment."

Shouto stared at his dinner as his father went on yet another tirade, which had been happening more and more frequently since internships ended. It had only been a week, but Shouto already had all of the go-to phrases memorized. He resisted the urge to mouth along as Endeavor repeated himself for the third time.

"...completely unprofessional." Endeavor huffed. "Honestly, Shouto! How do you expect to be taken seriously as the number one hero when their first introduction to you isn't a rescue or a villain takedown, but a cat meme?! Really?! You're not going to be a gentle hero, Shouto, that's not how you get to number one. You need to be ruthless and willing to do whatever it takes. Who cares about a stupid cat?"

"The internet, obviously." Shouto drawled. "There are three pages of results when you search for the memes."

Endeavor glared at him, the room becoming almost unbearably hot as his moustache flared, "That is exactly the problem Shouto. You don't want to become known for the wrong reasons. And even if you were gaining notoriety for something actually worthwhile, you don't even have a hero name for people to know you by!"

"I do have a hero name." Shouto pointed out. "It's Shouto."

"Your name is not a hero name." Endeavor growled. "The number one hero doesn't just let everyone call him by his first name and he doesn't stop on the street to pet stray cats. I raised you better than this, Shouto. If you keep this up, people are going to see you as weak."

"Most people are weak, Father." Shouto said innocently.

"You're not most people."

Shouto shrugged and took another bite, "It makes me seem relatable."

"You don't need to be relatable, Shouto." Endeavor looked like he was about to explode. "You need to be the best."

Shouto met his father's eyes, "Are you only saying that because you never accomplished either one?"

"Shouto!" Fuyumi hissed. "Stop! Please! Are you trying to get kicked out again?"

"Maybe." Shouto challenged. "It's better than staying here."

Endeavor glared at him for too long and Shouto was prepared for an explosion, but instead, his father went dead silent and left the room. He felt himself go cold. He'd messed up big time, hadn't he?

Fuyumi had tears in her eyes, "Why, Shouto? You know he doesn't like it when you talk back to him."

"Well maybe I don't like just sitting there and taking either." Shouto snapped. "I'm just...it's hard to keep it all inside, Fuyumi. It jumps out."

She looked at him sadly as Endeavor came back into the room, slamming a duffle bag down on the table, "You really think the streets are better than my house? Fine. There's a hundred dollars and some extra clothes. Let's see how long it is until you come crawling back."

"Dad, please." Fuyumi begged. "You don't want to do this! Shouto, just apologize!"

But Shouto had already grabbed the duffel and started walking toward the door, "See you later, Fuyumi. Have a nice life, Endeavor."

"Why you little…"

Shouto slammed the door behind him before he could hear whatever insult Endeavor had come up with and took a deep breath as he started to walk away down the dark street. At least he'd already been adopted by a cat mom. Hopefully Epurr would let him stay with her for a few nights.

Mineta had never really seen All for One before. Sure, he'd heard the rumors and Shigaraki talked about him all the time, plus he was even intimidating over the phone, but somehow his presence managed to be overwhelmingly intimidating from the moment that he stepped out of the portal and into the alley. He turned his head, taking in the scene despite the lack of eyes to do it with, and tilted his head as he turned to face Stain, "You gagged him."

"I wanted to make sure he didn't alert any passerby." Mineta explained. "But it's just one of my balls over his mouth, so I can take it off if you want to talk to him."

"That won't be necessary." All for One replied smoothly. "Good work, Trapper."

Mineta found himself smiling at the praise, especially since All for One was notoriously hard to please. Anyway, he deserved to be a little proud of himself! He'd captured the hero killer! Sure, he hadn't really *fought* him, but that still counted for something!

All for One knelt down slowly, careful not to touch anything sticky as he reached through the net and put his palm over where Stain's nose should have been, "Yes, this quirk will be quite useful in the right hands. Unfortunately, Stain, you have proven that those *right hands* aren't yours."

Stain glared at All for One as his quirk was taken, but Mineta wasn't sure he really understood who he'd just spoken to, because there wasn't any dread or devastation in his expression like he'd expected. Who knew, maybe Stain's conviction was just so strong, he thought he'd be able to continue to carry out his mission without a quirk. The poor guy was delusional.

"What are you going to do with him?" Mineta asked as All for One straightened up. "Do you have something in mind?"

All for One didn't bother turning around as he gave Mineta his orders, "The hero killer has outlived his usefulness. I'm sure I don't need to tell you what might happen if it's linked back to you, do I?"

Mineta swallowed, "Of course not, Sensei. Don't worry, I'll take care of it."

"Good." A portal appeared in front of him and All for One walked through it. "I don't take well to disappointment."

The portal closed and Mineta turned to see Stain glaring at him, daring him to actually do it and Mineta's expression hardened. He was so sick of everyone telling him what he could and couldn't do. If it wasn't that he was too short, it was that his quirk was too silly, or that he was too much of a coward, or that he wasn't good at head to head fights, or that he shouldn't because that wasn't what good little boys did. He was done listening to what society thought as possible.

He was going to prove them all wrong in whatever way he could and that way was right in front of him. Mineta reached past the net and unbuckled one of the knives on Stain's thigh, "So, what do you think, Stain? Do you think I have what it takes to be a true hero?"

Stain's glare didn't falter when Mineta stabbed him the first time. Or the second. Or the third. It wasn't until he had finished bleeding out

that Stain's expression finally went blank and Mineta drew in a shaky breath, wiping his hands down on his jacket before digging his backpack out from behind the dumpster and taking out a spray bottle. It was actually Mina's quirk that had given him the idea, and then some of the research he'd done into some of the older support course students had helped him actually accomplish it. His balls didn't really *unstick,* but Mina's acid could dissolve them until they were unrecognizable as his quirk.

As he sprayed each ball, the chemicals made them turn green and dissolve, expanding and bubbling until they almost resembled clumps of moss rather than purple balls. By the time he was done, the scene would have looked almost like a scene from a forest if it weren't for the bodies tangled in the nets. Mineta lifted his head and made sure his bloody jacket was stuffed inside his bag alongside the spray bottle before walking out of the alley like nothing had happened. It was time to go home and go to bed.

He still had school tomorrow, after all.

Epurr had jumped in his lap and immediately started kneading at his thighs and purring the moment he plopped down in the alley. Storming out had felt good at the moment, but now he was wondering if he'd been an idiot. Actually, scratch that, obviously he'd been an idiot, but the question was how big of an idiot had he been? He shouldn't have pissed off his old man like that, especially since Endeavor had phrased this entire ordeal as a challenge. Going back home now would just be letting his father win, and Shouto was too stubborn to let that happen.

He scratched Epurr between the ears and leaned his head back against the brick wall, perking up slightly when he heard someone walk into the alley.

"I'm surprised Endeavor would let his masterpiece sleep on the streets." Shigaraki rasped as he sat down beside him. "It's good to officially meet you, Shouto Todoroki."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 23, 2021 (MDT)

Partnership

Chapter Summary

Have some fluff and bonding!

Chapter Notes

Sorry this chapter is a day late, I wanted to finish Deku? instead.

Art!
CardinalCat
Claire;P
happyhungrydarkdragon
JoshonBoard

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouto froze, literally, sending out enough ice to glue Shigaraki to the street as Epurr yoweled and hopped off his lap. Shigaraki was unphased by Shouto's attack. He just rolled his eyes and disintegrated the ice like it was no big deal, but didn't make any move to turn Shouto into dust, which was surprising. He leaned his head back against the wall, "Careful. Do that too often you'll piss off the cat."

"I think she's more concerned about me staying alive." Shouto responded dryly. "You're a villain."

Shigaraki scoffed, "Newb. It's the middle of the night. I'm afk right now, so honestly, I'm not sure much of anything."

Shouto hesitantly warmed himself up a bit, melting some of the remaining ice, "What do you mean?"

Shigaraki shrugged, "You don't do boss fights on loading pages."

"Oh…" Shouto said helplessly. "Ok."

Shigaraki shot him a look out of the corner of his eye, "What? Have you never gamed before?"

"My father literally just kicked me out, do you really think he allowed

me to play video games." Shouto deadpanned. "I was too busy training to be his *Masterpiece.* "

"Your dad sounds like a dick." Shigaraki said. "But hey, at least the cat likes you."

Shouto smiled and extended a hand toward Epurr sighing when she hissed at him and turned away, "If she ever forgives me for suddenly freezing her like that. I'm sorry, Epurr! I panicked."

Epurr just flicked her tail and Shouto huffed, "Well, there goes another mother figure. I need to stop losing those."

Shigaraki frowned, "Your mom's not in the picture?"

"Mental hospital." Shouto explained. He probably shouldn't be telling a villain all this, but Shigaraki was letting him stay in his murder alley and didn't seem like he was in the mood to kill him at the moment, so he didn't want to be impolite. Besides, he'd said he *wasn't* a villain right now, whatever that meant. "What about yours?"

"No idea." Shigaraki scratched lightly at his neck. "Don't really remember much from before Sensei saved me."

"Oh yes." Shouto drawled. "The trauma."

Shigaraki snorted, "Like you're one to talk, scar boy. How'd you get it anyway?"

Shouto raised one eyebrow, "Did you miss the part where I said my mother is in a mental hospital?"

"She…?" Shigaraki whistled. "Whoa. I would've thought it was your old man."

"I blame him for it." Shouto found himself relaxing more and more in spite of himself. "In every memory I have of my mother, she's crying. She called my left side unbearable right before she poured boiling water on my face. All because I looked like him."

Shigaraki obviously wasn't quite sure how to respond to that, so they sat in relative silence for a while, only speaking to try to get Epurr to come back and sit on Shouto's lap. Eventually they managed it, but only because Shouto practically made his body into a furnace as an apology. It felt good to use his left side after so long, especially for things like this. His father hated the cat, so of course the cat got to

benefit from the fire he'd stolen from the bastard. Served him right for being father of the year.

"I'm getting you some games." Shigaraki said suddenly.

Shouto blinked, "Why?"

Shigaraki grinned, "Just trust me, ok? You'll like them."

Izuku was only half listening to the chaos happening behind him as he brainstormed a list of ideas, but Mei was on a roll, so right now he was just letting her do her thing and keeping an eye out to make sure she didn't accidently blow up the entire school, especially since they were technically there after hours. Half the school was probably fine, Ingenium would be able to smooth things over with Powerloader. Hopefully.

"I...I do not think I am comfortable with a retractable knife."

Tenya, as Mei insisted on calling him since saying Iida for both brothers was bound to get confusing, looked politely overwhelmed as he tried to talk Mei out of adding yet another weapon. Izuku sighed, "Mei-chan, Tenya's still recovering and we also have the vigilantism charges to worry about. Why don't you set it as a personal challenge *not* to add any weapons."

Mei pouted, "But that's no fun?"

"Oh really?" Izuku gave a mischievous grin. "So you don't want to see how complete of a first aid kid you can fit in? Or figure out how to make a grappling hook that doesn't put too much strain on the arm or his body? Or experiment with different holographic projection systems so he can always have a map with the villain's location or…"

"Fine, fine, I get the idea!" Mei said, turning to a new page in her notebook. "Focus on support and rescue, not combat."

"I'm completely fine with weapons." Tensei interjected. "Just for the record."

Mei's eyes glinted with excitement, "Then I'll just give *you* twice as many!"

"Have you considered whether you'll be fighting as a team?" Izuku asked. "I know that your sidekicks are already taking charge of

running the Iida-ten Agency, but you're basically going to have to learn to fight all over again, so you're not going to be heading up the agency for a while."

Tensei sighed, "I know. I already told the team that I want them to just move on. I don't want them waiting on me indefinitely while I recover... *if* I recover."

"Well, you're not going to get your legs back." Mei sai bluntly. "But we're gonna make this wheelchair baby the next best thing! Might be best to stick to urban heroics, though. We're gonna give you all the bells and whistles, but assuming that most surfaces are paved will streamline the design process and help me make a better baby for you."

"The best thing to do, at least from a marketing standpoint, is actually for the two of you to enter the field together and work as a duo." Izuku said. "Two brothers, injured by the same villain, who worked together to overcome insurmountable odds and be heroes? It's a classic underdog narrative, people will love it."

"Ooh! We could market them as the Cyborg Brothers!" Mei bounced up and down, grabbing Izuku's arm. "Cy-bros? What sounds better?"

"We can talk to the marketing department once they've trained a bit more with their new support items." Izuku interrupted. "For right now, we need to focus on changing their fighting style to accommodate for their disabilities and to coordinate well as a hero duo. Assuming you're ok with that plan?"

"I trust that you are the experts." Tenya said seriously.

Tensei shrugged, "I'm down. I've always wanted to fight crime with my little bro!"

He reached up and tugged Tenya down to his level so he could ruffle his hair and Tenya looked vaguely consternated, but accepting of his brother's affection. If these two could pull this off, they could open doors to hundreds of disabled kids that thought they couldn't be heroes. If a pair of brothers missing arms and legs could be heroes, maybe even a quirkless…

Izuku shook his head and turned to his list, tapping his pencil on a few of the ideas he'd put stars next to, "Tenya, you experience a lot of friction when you use your quirk, right?"

Tenya nodded, “Yes. It’s unavoidable, however. I can run faster than the average person, but…”

“But you have to take a lot of steps, which slows you down.” Izuku finished. “Have you considered rollerblades? It would match well with Tensei’s wheelchair and would reduce the friction. You’d have to practice, of course…”

“But wouldn’t that be rather difficult?” Tenya interrupted. “What if I run into stairs or...well, I’m sure fighting on wheels is very different than what I’m used to.”

“You’re still young, Tenya.” Tensei encouraged. “Give it a try. I mean, I’m gonna have to learn wheelie fighting too! We can do it together.”

Tenya took a deep breath and nodded decisively, “I will attempt to incorporate it into my fighting style then, but do not put them in my hero costume quite yet.”

“Of course not.” Izuku grinned. “Um, Tensei? Do you happen to know the pro-hero Artiste?”

Tensei frowned, “we’ve crossed paths, but we don't really work together that frequently, no. Why?”

Izuku grabbed his phone and started texting Nedzu, “She uses roller skates in her fighting. I want to see if she’d be willing to train you.”

Hitoshi couldn’t sleep, which wasn’t that unusual. What *was* unusual was that he’d been given the permission to roam the house when that happened and no one was going to think he was up to no good. It was surreal.

He hesitated another moment before leaving his room and heading toward the kitchen. Aizawa was still up too, apparently, just grading papers, and he barely glanced up when he heard Hitoshi come in, “Are you going to make tea?”

Hitoshi nodded on instinct, then remembered he was actually allowed to talk here, “Yeah. I was.”

Aizawa hummed, “Make me one too.”

“Sure.” Hitoshi grabbed the kettle. “Will Mic want one too?”

Aizawa glanced up at the clock, “No, he’s not going to be home for at

least another hour and that's if nothing weird happens at the station between then and now. He can make his own if he wants when he gets home."

It still threw Hitoshi for a loop every time one of his adults answered his questions without hesitating. Usually it was Aizawa, but even Mic didn't think twice about ansswering him. He'd be lying if he said it didn't feel amazing. It was almost as good as being around Mei and Izuku, so that was saying something.

When he finished the tea, he set a cup down in front of Aizawa and sat down in one of the chairs. Should he go back to his room? Was Aizawa going to get annoyed with him for interrupting his work?

Almost as if he realized Hitoshi's indecision, Aizawa started talking to him, most of his attention still on grading, "How has Uraraka been doing? Has she been adjusting well to her new quirk?"

"Uh, yeah." Hitoshi thought that was a weird way of putting it, but it was a pretty accurate way of describing her new mutation. "The earrings the kidnappers made her are working pretty well and I can stop her most of the time, but she's actually stopped *herself* a couple times now, and her accuracy's getting better, so that's promising."

"Good." Aizawa nodded. "We'll be starting combat exercises again soon, and I don't want her to be at a disadvantage."

"Don't worry, she can handle herself." Hitoshi said. "Do you, uh, mind if I watch tv?"

Aizawa nodded absently, "Just make sure the show isn't stupid."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 1, 2021 (MDT)

Chapter 56

Chapter Summary

Just some hero class training.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Indifferent_Insomnia~(눈□눈)

Memes!
X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tensei's smile was kind as he looked at Tenya, "Are you ready for this?"

Tenya took a deep breath, "No. I don't deserve a second chance at heroism like this. They should have expelled me."

Tensei nodded seriously, "They should have. But then again, they should have told me there was no way I could return to heroism and here we are. Whether or not you deserve another chance, Tenya, the important thing is what you do with it."

"I suppose." Tenya said tightly, rubbing his shoulder nervously. Even though the fabric of the uniform, he could feel where it transitioned from skin into cold metal. Hatsume had said it would take a while to get used to, but both he and Tensei had wanted to get back to...well, not normal, but to training as soon as possible and Recovery Girl had given them the go ahead, so here they were.

Tenya held open the door while Tensei rolled through and he swallowed nervously as he realized the entire class was staring at them. They were a few minutes late, which Tenya hated, but Aizawa had insisted that was the best way to make sure they only had to explain the situation once. That didn't mean Tenya was comfortable, but he was obeying the teacher, so he'd get through it. Hopefully.

"Perfect, you're here." Aizwa said, checking their names on the roll sheet. "Everyone, you all know Iida already, and unless you've had your head under a rock in this class, you should already be aware of his brother Tensei Iida, aka, Ingenium."

The class nodded hesitantly, some of them giving Tenya pitying or even wary looks. Tenya swallowed nervously and bowed, “I, uh, I apologize for my actions. Nedzu and Aizawa have permitted me to rejoin the hero course on a trial basis, provided that I can prove I have learned from my mistakes.”

“For the sake of the rest of your limbs, I hope you do.” Aizawa said dryly. “And before the rest of you ask, Ingenium is also here as a student, of sorts. With the help of some support items, he has decided to try to reenter the field as a hero, but that will require completely overhauling his entire fighting style, so for all intents and purposes, he’s basically a first year again and he’ll be tagging along with the class for a while as part of his physical therapy and rehabilitation. He’s about as immature as most of you anyway, so I have no doubt he’ll fit right in.”

Tensei laughed loudly, “Oh, come on Shou! Give me some credit! My immaturity is completely intentional!”

Aizawa shot him a glare, “That makes it worse. Find your seats.”

“That’s ok.” Tesei winked. “I brought my own.”

That earned a few laughs from the class and Tenya hurried to his empty seat while Tensei just parked himself at the edge of the first row. This was going to be an interesting year.

Ochako giggled quietly as she caught sight of All Might frantically stuffing a pocket-sized teaching handbook in his pocket before striding through the door with a smile on his face that was obviously his attempt at hiding how insecure he was. Ochako was sure that he’d get more comfortable with teaching as the year went on, but for now it was oddly comforting to see the number one hero flounder and make mistakes, just like she was doing with One for All. It helped her feel more like a worthy successor, or well, helped her see that a perfect successor didn’t exist and that all of them were just trying their best. It was nice.

“Hello children!” All Might boomed. “For today’s training exercise, we are going to play dodgeball!”

“Dodgeball?!” Bakugo practically exploded and a few of their other classmates sniggered at his reaction. “I’m in the hero course to fight, not run away from a stupid ball!”

“Well, uh, you also need to know how to evade attacks, young Bakugo.” All Might stuttered. “It is one thing to beat an opponent into submission, but it is another to survive long enough to do so.”

“Come on, Blasty, it’ll be fun!” Mina laughed. “Unless, of course, you don’t think you can win.”

“Of course I can win!” Bakugo yelled. “You damn extras, I’ll make you pay for underestimating me!”

“Well, then, not that that’s taken care of…” All Might cleared his throat. “Dodgeball. To keep it simple, we’ll be playing last man standing, so once you’re out of the game, you’re out. Whichever team has the last player on the field wins. Teams will be divided as evenly with odd seat numbers on one team and even seat numbers on the other. Both Iidas will be on the same team, since they are still getting back into the swing of things. Any questions?”

Ochako bounced with excitement as her classmates shook their heads. This was perfect! She hadn’t given out a whole lot of details about her new abilities and she’d been too nervous to really use One for All in a combat exercise yet, but this would be good because it shouldn’t require too much accuracy on her part. She just had to dodge the balls and not get hit. She could do this.

They all got into position, eyeing the balls in the center. Ochako grinned at Hitoshi, who was on the other team and he returned with a smirk of his own. They both knew each other’s weaknesses, so it should be an even match, but Ochako was confident. He was going down.

All Might blew the whistle and everyone rushed forward. Bakugo was one of the first to reach the center and Ochako anchored to him, her earrings beeping for a split second before she was at the center. Bakugo reared back when she suddenly appeared in his face. She smirked and grabbed the ball he’d been reaching for before anchoring to Mineta, who was still near the edges, and disappearing.

“What the fuck, Round Face!” Bakugo shouted. “We’re on the same team!”

“Sorry Bakugo!” Ochako smiled and shrugged. “You were the closest person to where I needed to be!”

Bakugo grabbed another ball and launched it with explosive force into Ojiro’s stomach, “Well, try to mess up the *other* team next time!”

“Come on, Bakugo.” Hitoshi tilted his head to the side like some sort of creepy doll and didn’t blink as he stared at Bakugo with wide eyes. “Can a little girl really mess you up that much?”

Bakugo screwed his eyes shut, “Nice try, eyebags, but I’ve figured out your quirk and it’s not gonna…”

Hitoshi smiled as he took control, “Hmm, good idea, but not quite.”

Shouji was using all six of his arms to throw balls in every direction and it didn’t take long for one to hit Bakugo in the back, knocking him out of the brainwashing, “Oh, Eyebags, I’m gonna…”

“Young Bakugo! You’re out!” All Might said. “Please come to the side until the next round!”

Bakugo glared at Hitoshi, “You’re gonna pay for this, eyebags.”

Hitoshi returned his glare smoothly, “I’m looking forward to it.”

About half the class was already out at this point, the initial bloodbath making almost no time at all and Ochako hurried to remove the gravity on her ball and throw it at Jiro, who managed to dodge. Without gravity, however, the ball just continued forward and hit Tensei before he could wheel himself out of the way. Ochako winced, “Sorry!”

“I’m good!” Tensei gave her a thumbs up. “Nice hit!”

Ochako smiled proudly, “Thanks!”

Dark Shadow launched an attack at her, but there was a group of abandoned balls near Mina, so Ochako anchored to her and disappeared right as the ball would have hit her. The more she jumped, the better she was getting at recentering herself, so when she reappeared behind Mina, it only took her half a second before she had bent down, retrieved a ball and launched it. Mina turned around just in time for the ball to hit her in the stomach instead of the back and she laughed as she made her way off the field, “Oh, we are gonna have so much fun pranking people!”

Ochako giggled and shook her head as she grabbed another ball. On her team, it was her, Shouji, and Tsu still in. Hitoshi was still in for the other team, and they seemed to be doing a bit better considering that they had Tokoyami, Kirishima, Yaomomo, and most likely Hagakure, since her gloves were still lying on the floor. Yaomomo had

created what looked like a t-shirt cannon and was using it to launch the balls with ridiculous accuracy. Shoji, however, could launch more at a time. He grabbed another six balls and managed to hit Hagakure by sheer luck, judging by the yelp, but Yaoyorozu used his split-second of distraction to hit him with her launcher. Ochako squeaked as another ball came flying at her courtesy of Kirishima and she instinctively teleported away and toward Tokoyami, accidentally stumbling as she reappeared and knocking right into him, which gave Tsu the opening she needed to get him out, but unfortunately Yaoyorozu returned the favor almost immediately. It was now Ochako versus Kirishima, Yaomomo and, of course, Hitoshi.

“You may as well give up now.” Hitoshi drawled, tossing a ball between his hands. “Do you really think you can take on all of us?”

Ochako just smirked, giving Hitoshi a quick nod before using Kirishima as an anchor to warp across the field. She ended up way farther than she’d been trying for, probably overcorrecting for getting too close the last couple times, but she was still able to grab a ball and throw it at Kirishima, who was so surprised at her sudden appearance that he hardened instead of dodged. The best plan at this point was probably to keep moving. If she turned this into a game of wack-a-mole instead of dodgeball, then she might even be able to win this, especially if she could bait Yaomomo and Hitoshi into hitting each other.

She grinned and switched anchors every jump, never staying in one place for more than a few seconds until she got lucky and appeared right between them. She stayed put for almost five seconds, long enough for them both to take aim and let loose their balls, then disappeared just in time for both attacks to fly right through where she had been and hit the other person right as Ochako herself reappeared beside All Might, “How was that? Did I win?”

“Woo!” Mina cheered loudly. “That’s our girl!”

“How did you do that?!” Kaminari’s eyes were wide. “That’s an awesome quirk development. I wish I’d learned that much on my internship.”

Ochako couldn’t stop smiling proudly as All Might put his hand on her shoulder and spoke quietly, “It seems as though you are doing quite well at making that power your own, Young Uraraka. The others would be proud.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 7, 2021 (MDT)

New

Chapter Summary

> Is this chapter just crack taken seriously? I don't know, but I love it.

Chapter Notes

> Art!
> Indifferent_Insomnia~(눈□눈)
> |•Smoked._.salmoN•|
>
> Memes!
> X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku watched the footage from the dodgeball match for the third time. Uraraka was progressing rapidly, which was impressive, but he still couldn't shake the nagging feeling that there was something *off* about the entire situation. People's quirks didn't just become ten times more powerful overnight! Quirk development and even quirk mutations were either gradual or in response to trauma and neither case was present here. And then there was what Uraraka had said about *giving it back* if he hadn't helped her. There was something weird going on and Izuku wasn't sure how he was supposed to give an accurate analysis off of an incomplete, or worse *falsified,* data set.

Hitoshi didn't knock when he came into Izuku's workroom and Izuku didn't turn to acknowledge him, but he did nod, "Hey Hitoshi, make yourself at home."

"Already done." Hitoshi sat backwards on an extra chair so that his arms were resting on the back and spun around. "Oh, are you watching the dodgeball thing? Ocha did pretty well, don't you think?"

Izuku groaned, "Exactly! She's doing great and I still don't know *why!* Why did her quirk get so powerful? Why did she have no control over it? It just doesn't make sense!"

HItoshi hummed thoughtfully, "I don't know. Aizawa was asking about her the other night and even referred to it as her *new quirk,* cause it's just so different from her standard gravity manipulation."

Izuku's brain rebooted, "Say that again."

Hitoshi frowned, "Teleportation is different than gravity manipulation? I thought that was obvious."

"No, before that." Izuku grabbed a notebook and almost broke his pencil from how quickly he grabbed it. "You called it her new quirk."

"Well, Aizawa did." Hitoshi shrugged. "But yeah. So what?"

Izuku grinned, "So what are the problems? All of a sudden, Uraraka can teleport, when she couldn't before. A new quirk would 100% explain that. She had zero control, but has developed it extremely quickly, just like a four year old getting used to their new quirk. And people don't just develop new quirks, which means someone gave it to her, which explains why she would be able to return it. No wonder she's been super vague about it! Obviously something like this is probably a huge secret!"

Hitoshi sat back in shock, "Izuku, this...this isn't...is something like this even possible?"

Izuku's phone buzzed and he checked to see a new message from Nedzu, "I think we're about to find out."

Mineta was tired of diner french fries, but small towns didn't have much to offer in the way of stake out food. All for one had assigned him to look into a few Stain fanboys and determine if any were worth recruiting. He wasn't quite sure what exactly All for One had in mind for the new recruit, and *really* wasn't sure why he was sending Stain's killer on this mission, especially because Mineta still had homework to do in the afternoons, but it seemed like Sensei had conveniently forgotten about that fact. Seriously, with all he did for the league, *he* should be the favorite, not the deadbeat gamer with a dandruff problem.

He stuffed another fry in his face and kept an eye on the street his target *should* be passing though, if Mineta had guessed his route correctly. Most of the others had been a bust. They were either too weak, too wishy-washy in their ideals, or just plain not cut off from society enough to be convinced to leave it all behind and join the league. Mineta wasn't betting any money on this guy being any different. He consistently liked posts about Stain or ones in line with those ideals, but hadn't made any of his own, and he was the classic definition of *failure to launch,* staying in the same small town after

high school despite the almost nonexistent career opportunities here. Mineta might as well just save himself some time, cross *Shuichi Iguchi* off his list, and go home.

But he'd promised All for One he'd do the stupid mission, so he waited and finally, *finally,* the guy started walking along the street below him. The street wasn't *busy,* but there were definatly people around, and their reactions to this Iguchi guy were almost more promising than the guy himself. People stared at him while he passed and Mineta was 100% sure that some of them were whispering slurs as soon as they thought *the lizard* was out of earshot. A few even passed to the other side of the street to avoid him. It was a classic case of mutant-quirk discrimination, made even worse by the fact that, just like there was only one stop light, there was probably only one mutant in town, so all that prejudice and hatred from all those people got concentrated and projected onto him.

Mineta smiled and started bouncing along the rooftops, keeping in the shadows as he followed behind his target, always keeping him in sight. A guy with strong ideals in line with what Stain had believed and ready, oh so ready, to leave it all behind and screw all the people that had ever shunned him. Iguchi was *exactly* what All for One was looking for.

He slipped into the window of Iguchi's apartment while the guy himself took the stairs even though Mineta knew full well that he could climb walls. They'd have to get him into the habit of using his quirk more casually then, but that was a problem for later. For now, Mineta just stuck a few balls in the corner of the room and hung out as the lock clicked and Iguchi waked in, "You know, speaking from experience, it would be faster to just climb the wall and come in through the window."

Iguchi squeaked and Mineta almost thought he was going to do that thing where a lizard loses its tail when in a fight or flight situation, but all Iguchi's limbs stayed attached. For now. Iguchi lowered himself into a sloppy fighting stance and stared up at Mineta in a mix of fear and curiosity, "Who are you?! Why are you in my apartment?!"

"You can call me Trapper." Mineta smiled and dropped onto the floor into a couch before standing. "And I'm here to change your life."

Shouto was still figuring this whole *homeless* thing out. Maybe *living on the streets* was a better term, because he's already adopted murder

alley as his second home long before his father kicked him out permanently. Luckily, he didn't have to worry about things like showers or food because UA had a gym and a lunch room, so he got a shower every morning and at least one meal a day, which wasn't that much less than Endeavor had been giving him anyway, so it wasn't too bad. The weirdest part of living on the streets, however, was definitely Shigaraki.

He was actually fairly normal, when he wasn't killing people, and was apparently a pretty big gamer. He'd brought his laptop and was trying to introduce Shouto to a video game, but Shouto couldn't even figure out how to pause the game, much less what he was supposed to do.

Shigaraki groaned for the fifth time, "Seriously?! It's just point and shoot! How do you mess that up?!"

"Very carefully." Shouto deadpanned.

The computer pinged a few times and a few notifications came up on the screen.

Nice burn

Dusty, you got a new streaming buddy?! poggers

New guy = comedic relief

Shouto frowned, "Um...is that part of the game?"

"What did you do?!" Shigaraki scratched at his neck. "What button did you press?!"

"I don't know!" Shouto panicked. "I...I was just pressing anything! I don't know what I'm doing, you know that!"

Shigaraki stared at him in disbelief, "I can't believe you're so bad at this that you *accidentally started streaming!"*

The computer pinged again with notifications.

Don't blame him for you being a bad teacher!

Keep the new guy!

An accident?! How?!

"You...you're a streamer?" Shouto blinked. "How do you even have

time for that between attacking…”

Shigaraki slammed a hand over his mouth, thankfully with only four fingers, and pressed a button that made a large *mute* notification flash across the screen, “Ok, first rule: don’t ever give out personal information online. This includes you being a hero brat or me being a villain. Got it?”

Shouto nodded nervously and Shigaraki took his hand off his mouth, “And yeah, I’m a streamer. It’s...just something I do for me. Sometimes it helps to rage, ok? I’m not popular or anything, but since you’re here and people are already watching, we may as well turn this into public humiliation.”

“Hey!” Shouto said indignantly. “I’m not...ok, well, maybe I *am* that bad, but hey!”

“Next rule goes along with number one.” Shigaraki didn’t even bother to respond to his protests, but he was a villain, so Shouto didn’t really expect him to. “Don’t use your real name. My tag is Dusty, so use it. What’s yours?”

“Uh…” Shouto shrugged. “Shouto?”

The look Shigaraki gave him very clearly stated that *that* was unacceptable, so Shouto started looking around. His eyes fell on Epurr, who was curled against his left side, which was heated just enough so that she didn’t crawl across the keyboard. Again. She was the inspiration for stealing his life and his quirk back from his father, so maybe…

“Icy Cat.” Shouto blurted out. “You can call me Icy Cat.”

Shigaraki snorted, but unmuted the mic, “Sorry about that, my local idiot somehow managed to mute us both. But yeah, I found a new streaming buddy for everyone to laugh at, so if you don’t make him cry, I’ll be pissed. Icy Cat here grew up with a silver spoon in his mouth and has never played before, so give him hell, yeah? Ok, now unpause the game and let’s get playing again. We’ve wasted too much time on this side quest already.”

Shouto froze, “Uh...how do I do that again?”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 14, 2021 (MDT)

Legacy

Chapter Summary

One for All and All for One

Chapter Notes

Art!
Jess
RogueBEEctor
ThatsSo***Yikes***
Stormy Person X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi tried to shake the feeling that he was in trouble as he, Izuku, Mei, Ochako, Present Mic, All Might *and* Aizawa all crowded into the space across from Nedzu's desk. Izuku was practically vibrating with excitement next to him and after a hurried explanation in the hall on the way there, Mei was doing the same. Ochako and Mic just looked confused, but that was probably because nobody had had time to explain to either of them what this meeting was about. Aizawa just looked done with life and if he didn't know better, Hitoshi would have said that All Might was vaguely terrified.

Nedzu, on the other hand, looked absolutely delighted, "Well, Midoriya, it appears you have discovered yet *another* state secret and it's not even the end of the semester yet! I must say I'm impressed."

Izuku turned bright red, "I...it was...I wasn't *trying* to!"

Nedzu smiled a bit wider. "That makes it even better! I knew taking you on as a student would be fun!"

"Wait, what secret?" Ochako's eyes flitted about the room. "I can leave if you need to discuss something…"

"Don't bother." Aizawa sighed. "Midoriya just figured out One for All. It's a miracle it took him *this* long, honestly, considering that he somehow knew about All Might's smaller form before the school year even started."

Ochako sighed in relief, “Oh good. That means I can actually ask you guys all the questions now. It was getting really hard to remember that you didn’t know!”

“Uh…” Hitoshi raised his hand. “What’s One for All?”

“That must be the name of Ochako’s second quirk!” Izuku piped up. “What are the mechanics of it? Does it make you teleport or did it just strengthen your quirk, which resulted in teleportation? Did you know it would do that? Did you even know about it before it manifested? How did it develop? Is it genetic or artificial? How did…”

Ochako cut him off with a giggle, “All Might gave it to me, so no, it’s not genetic, but it *did* have to be transferred through dna, which is kinda gross. And we really thought it was gonna strengthen my muscles like it did for him, but the quirk kinda just latched onto my quirk instead, so no. We had absolutely no idea that I was going to start teleporting.”

Izuku lunged to grab his notebook and Mei cackled, “Oh, this is gonna be *fun!”*

“Whoa!” Tenya yelped as he tripped and fell into the grass for the seventeenth time. He’d counted.

Tensei laughed as he wheeled up to him, “You need to loosen up, Tenya. You keep falling because you’re too tense!”

“I’m falling because the ground keeps rolling out from under my feet.” Tenya spat, tearing the roller blades off his feet. “This can’t possibly be faster than just running!”

“Just calm down.” Tensei put his hand on his shoulder. “Look, I know you’re frustrated, but you can’t let your anger get the best of you, ok?”

Tenya felt the anger rush out of him like a deflating balloon, leaving a familiar sense of dread and guilt in its place, “I…you’re right. I’m sorry. It won’t happen again.”

Tensei sighed, “Of course it will happen again, Tenya. You can’t just repress anger and expect not to blow up, that’s what got you into this mess in the first place.”

Tenya swallowed, “I know.”

“Look.” Tensei sat up and started rolling away. “You have to learn how to go with the movement, Tenya, otherwise you’re gonna keep slowing yourself down. The problem isn’t the roller blades, it’s that you keep acting like nothing is going to move or change. You can’t fight your own momentum, you have to just go with it!”

“I’m *trying!”* Tenya insisted. “But these things are impossible! I can’t balance on them!”

“Then don’t try to balance!” Tensei grinned. “Why don’t you just…I don’t know, lean into where you want to go and stop worrying so much? Stop being so tense and just…”

“Go with the movement.” Tenya groaned. “Sure, fine. I’m just going to fall twice as fast, but fine, let’s do it your way!”

Tensei smiled and gestured for him to continue and Tenya rolled his eyes as he pulled the roller blades back on, “This isn’t going to work.”

“Maybe not.” Tensei shrugged. “But it’s worth a try.”

Tenya sighed and shakily stood up, holding his arms out on either side. Tensei said he was too tense, that he needed to loosen up. Tenya took a deep breath and tried to relax, forcing himself not to imagine the roller blades rolling out from under him as he started moving. Within seconds, he started falling again, but instead of freezing up he tried to *go with the movement* whatever that meant. Instead of falling over like he’d expected to, though, he just turned and gained momentum. It felt natural and almost freeing as he sped faster and faster…straight into the ground. He spat out a bit of dirt and glared at Tensei, who was holding his sides and would probably be on the floor laughing if he wasn’t stuck in a wheelchair, “Stop laughing.”

“Sorry!” Tensei gasped. “It’s kinda my job as a big brother. But how did it feel? Well, before the epic crash and burn?”

Tenya frowned and looked at the roller blades, “I think you’re right. Maybe it’s worth a try.”

Shuichi gulped before following Trapper through the misty portal. He didn’t know why he was doing this, it seemed completely idiotic, but at the same time, it had to be better than staying here. He’d been in this same stupid town with teh same stupid predjudices for so long and sure, Trapper had been a bit vague on the how, but he’d basically said that not only could he help him get out of his dead end life, he

could help him change the world and disprove all those prejudices that had been holding him back ever since he was a kid! Yeah, it was a little sketchy and was probably the exact opposite of a good idea, but at the end of the day...what did he really have to lose? Friends? He'd never had them. Family? Not the best relationship to begin with? Sanity?

...Ok, maybe that last one, but he had to be insane to begin with because he was now stuck with this kid he barely knew in an unfamiliar location and he didn't even know what city they were in. Oh, and there was a blind guy hooked to machines like some pre-quirk hero movie. What had he gotten himself into?

"Hello Iguchi." The man smiled, which was somehow creepier without eyes. "My name is All for One. I'm sure you're wondering what's going on."

Shuichi nodded hesitantly, "Yeah. Trapper said you were going to change my life...and the world."

All for One grinned wider, "Exactly. You are familiar with the work of Stain, correct?"

Suichi felt a steak of happiness spurt through him, "The hero killer? Yeah! He had such a vision! Getting rid of all those fake heroes! If only he'd been able to complete his mission..."

"I agree…" All for One nodded. "It's a pity that the heroes did not allow it…"

Shuichi frowned, "the heroes? But the news said it was a rival vigilante…"

"Do you really think that the corrupt commission would want society believing any differently?" All for One's voice was full of pity. "But you seem like a bright young man, Iguchi. You deserve to know the truth. Stain was not killed by a rival. He was killed by one of the fake heroes he strove to destroy."

Shuichi gasped, "What?! A hero killed him? And they just got away with it?"

"Yeah, they sure did." Trapper piped up. "It's so unfair isn't it? The *heroes* get away with everything and get all the support, while the rest of us are underestimated and left in the dust."

“So how do we fix it?” Shuichi grit his teeth. “You said you were going to help me change the world.”

All for One nodded, “I’m glad you asked. Before he died, Stain was able to leave behind one final piece of himself…a torch to pass on, if you will. My quirk allows me to take powers from some and give them to others who can use them better. In his final moments, when Stain knew death was certain, he entrusted me with finding a new holder for his quirk. Someone who was worthy of continuing his legacy.”

Shuichi felt like he could hardly breathe as All for One reached out for him, “Shuichi Iguchi, you *are* worthy. Will you carry on Stain’s legacy and vow to take down those fakes that call themselves heroes?”

“Yes!” Shuichi didn’t even have to think about it. “It’s all I’ve ever dreamed of! Please! Let me change the world!”

All for One chuckled, “No hesitation, just as I expected. Well, come here and let me give you your gift.”

It hurt. It felt like every cell in his body was being pulled apart and rearranged as what must be Stain’s quirk was forced into him. It felt like an eternity and Shuichi was fairly certain that he screamed at some point, but a few seconds later, he was on his knees catching his breath as Trapper and All for One smiled down at him.

“How do you feel?” Trapper asked excitedly. “Powerful?”

Shuichi nodded, “It’s…I’m carrying Stain’s essence. A part of him is a part of me. His legacy.”

“Exactly.” All for One agreed. “But now that you are Stain’s successor, you can no longer be who you were before. What should we call you?”

Shuichi took a deep breath and his expression hardened in determination, “Call me Spinner, because I’m the one who’s going to spin the web that all the heroes will trap themselves in.”

All for One grinned again, “Well then, Spinner, welcome to the league of villains.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 21, 2021 (MDT)

Improvement

Chapter Summary

Cheat Code finally delivers the analysis packets.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Sparks
CardinalCat
alejandrarubibuci

Memes!
X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Today was the day. It didn't seem like that much of an unusual day in the morning, Shouto had just showed up early to be able to shower before class like he had ever since Endeavor kicked him out, but when he'd walked into class, there was a small packet sitting on every single desk besides Iida's and that was only because he had already picked his up and was reading through it furiously. Ingenium had parked his wheelchair in the back of the room and waved to him with the hand that wasn't currently leafing through a packet of his own. Shouto almost hesitated, but ended up shaking his head and walking to his desk despite how weird this was. When he got to his desk though and noticed Cheat Code's logo emblazoned on the cover, everything made sense.

That analyst probably still wanted him to use his fire, didn't he?

Well, it was high time he started showing his old man that his fire was *his* now and not some gift from Endeavor. Besides, Shiggy had been harping on him for using too many of the same attack. Shouto had no idea how they had gotten so many followers in a week, but apparently people liked to see him make a fool of himself and he got an unhealthy amount of enjoyment out of imagining his fathers face if he found out that over 100,000 people were watching his perfect masterpiece fail every single night. Even just thinking about it made him smile.

After that first stream, the new followers had started sending in requests for games for him to try and one of the most popular ones

had been a game called Super Smash Bros. Shouto had never heard of it, but apparently it had been around since pre-quirk times and had gone through about a million different iterations, but all with the same premise of the players trying to beat the shit out of each other and push each other off a platform. Of course, Shouto hadn't understood the goal and immediately walked straight off it with a delayed *oops* that made the chat go wild, but it brought back pleasant memories from the sports festival.

Shouto thought he was almost decent at the game, but Shigaraki apparently disagreed, because he won. Every. Single. Time. He said that part of Shouto's probabem was that he tried using the same attacks over and over and it made him too predictable and easy to beat, but Shouto thought that was kind of unfair considering that those were the only two attacks he knew. The only way to get better, though, was to learn more attacks, hence why he was determined to master his fire.

The hero course wasn't too much different than a video game, all things considered.

If Shigaraki were here, he'd probably call this entire packet a skills list or something and tell Shouto to max out his stats, which he assumed meant something like being the strongest he could be. He looked through the analysis and suggestions carefully, mentally highlighting anything he hadn't considered before or felt like he could easily incorporate into an attack. Most of it wasn't new, but before he hadn't been ready to...how would Shiggy say it? Level up?

By now, most of the class had arrived and most of his classmates were yelling about what was in their packets and comparing them to each other. Some were pretty happy with the suggestions, like Ashido who had to be persuaded not to try some of the new techniques on her desk, while others were...a little less receptive.

"Why should I stop looking at the babes during battle?!" Mineta sobbed. "Boobs are life, not distractions!"

"Lactose intolerant?!" Aoyama's sparkle almost seemed dimmer, "No! Tell me it can't be true!"

"Consider avoiding daylight." Tokoyami muttered. "So the demon behind a screen wishes me to embrace the darkness."

"Oh, stop being so dramatic." Jiro rolled her eyes. "You don't *have* to take the suggestions, you know."

“But, I mean, that’s why Cheat Code is giving them to us now, right?” Kaminari pointed out. “So we’ll have time to incorporate them before finals?”

Shouto nodded. It made sense. He wasn’t quite sure who Cheat Code actually was or why he was so interested in their class, but his old man never accepted help, so Shouto was going to take as much of it as he could get, then hopefully rub it in Endeavor’s face.

Mina bounced over to Uraraka, “Ok, Miss Gravity Warper over there, what does yours say?”

“Uh…” Uraka flipped helplessly through her packet, which on further inspection was just a single page. “Nothing.”

“What?!” Bakugo almost exploded as he ripped the paper from her hands. “Does that pencil pusher think you’re better than the rest of us and don’t need advice or something?! *Come talk to me!* What the fuck does that even mean?!”

Mineta gasped and stopped crying, “Uraraka! Do you know Cheat Code?!”

Uraraka’s eyes widened and she started waving her arms, “No! I don’t! Or...at least I don’t think so…”

“Maybe he’s hiding in plain sight.” Shouto suggested. “Or maybe he isn’t a person at all and is actually a concept.”

Yaoyorozu nodded, “That *would* make sense…”

“No it wouldn’t!” Kaminari pulled at his hair. “A concept can’t make an analysis packet!”

Shouto just raised one eyebrow, “Can’t it?”

His eye was drawn back to Uraraka when Shinso walked over to her desk and whispered something in her ear. Her eyes widened and Shouto heard her earrings beep a few times before she was gone. It was going to be difficult to beat her with her new quirk developments, but he’d find a way. Maybe Shigaraki could help him figure out a way to work around the glitch? On second thought, that probably wasn’t the best idea. It was hard to remember that Shigaraki was a villain sometimes and not just some hobo he met in an alley sometimes.

Aizawa walked in a few seconds after the bell and by the look on his

face, he was seriously considering walking straight back out again, “I see Cheat Code left your analysis packets this morning.”

“Actually, I think he might have left them last night.” Shinso grinned. “Pretty sure he basically haunts the walls of UA like some sort of goblin.”

Aizawa glared at him for a second before sighing, “ I’m looking forward to seeing how you incorporate his critiques, but don’t forget that you have academics as well. Now open your books, we have a lot of work to do if you expect to pass the finals and earn the right to participate in the summer training camp.”

The class exploded, “What?!”

Spinner wondered if this was what it meant to go mad with power. He certainly *felt* a little mad, but Stain had believed that a little insanity was the only way to save the world. Spinner felt him sometimes, deep inside his mind, whispering. He even swore that he could see the hero killer in his dreams sometimes, a shadowy figure vaguely almost-there, but not quite. It felt like there was something Stain wanted him to know, but their bond wasn’t deep enough for any real communication to happen and All for One had told him that there was only one way to make that bond deeper: by carrying on Stain’s legacy and following in his footsteps.

He had spent the last week killing as many false heroes as he could and for someone who had never killed a single person before, he was actually fairly good at it. Stain’s quirk covered his weaknesses perfectly and with the way their quirks combined, it was almost as if it was destiny that Spinner continued the hero killer’s work. He would use his birth quirk to climb the walls of alleys where the heroes would be passing, then strike. All for One had been kind enough to gift him Stain’s Katana, so he used it often, but he’d found that with the addition of Stain’s quirk, his teeth had shaped themselves into sharp points and whatever weak natural venom his lizard quirk gave him made Stain’s quirk even more effective, so if he bit the false heroes, they would be paralyzed longer and it eliminated the middle man, since the blood could be ingested immediately, instead of after a delay.

He’d gone after smaller heroes so far, sidekicks and lesser known targets such as Native, who was currently frozen on the ground in front of him. Perhaps he should keep to operating mostly under the

cover of darkness, but if Trapper could effectively move and avoid detection during the day, then Spinner could learn to do the same. He couldn't afford to sit around and waste time when there were fakes that needed to be eliminated and a legacy that he needed to maintain.

He licked the last of the blood off his lips and stalked toward Native, "You are a disgrace to the ranks of heroes. You're a fake and you don't deserve your title, much less your life."

Native was panting heavily, unable to move to stop the bleeding from either the stab wound in his shoulder or the bite mark on his hand, "Who...who even are you?"

"I am the hero killer's successor." Spinner answered. "The mark left by Stain's murder that can never be removed! I am the one who is going to rid society of fake heroes like you!"

Native's eyes widened in terror, "You...you're insane!"

"Maybe…" Spinner smiled, his newly sharp teeth on full display. "But I've done more for society already than you've ever done in your entire miserable career and I'm going to do *so much more!* "

He used Stain's Katana to stab Native in the leg, twisting the blade as he pulled it out, "I hope the heroes find you before you bleed out so you can spread Stain's message, but if not, it's no big loss. You weren't doing any good alive either."

Native's cries echoed in his ears as Spinner climbed up the wall and went off to find his next victim.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 28, 2021 (MDT)

Glitter

Chapter Summary

New ideas are developed.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Jess
Sparks

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku ran into class just before the bell rang and pretty much immediately his classmates turned to stare at him. He fidgeted awkwardly. He wasn't usually this late, but he'd gotten an idea about his teleporting tracker last night and had completely lost track of time before his mom ran into his room and practically cried as she told him he was going to be late for school.

Kohaku looked him up and down and whistled lowly, "Dang, Midoriya. No tie today?"

Izuku instinctively looked down at his outfit. He was wearing the UA uniform...mostly. He might have been in too big of a rush this morning to even want to deal with the *idea* of tying a tie, so he'd swapped the dress shirt for a black t-shirt, which had way better flexibility for crawling through the tunnels. He was still wearing the uniform! Just...styled differently.

He laughed awkwardly, "Well, I mean, none of you guys keep your full uniforms on either, and just cause I'm working at a computer doesn't mean I shouldn't be comfortable, right? Besides, Katsuki's in the hero course and he never wears his tie either."

"Speaking of!" Mei slammed her notebook down on her desk. "I have an idea! We should glitter bomb him!"

Izuku looked over her shoulder at the design she'd sketched out, "Mei, you do know that normal glitter bombs don't normally include C4, right?"

“They don’t?” Mei frowned. “But then why call it a bomb? I mean, it probably wouldn’t do *too* much damage…”

Powerloader cleared his throat and the class sheepishly turned to look at him, “Hatsume, if you’re going to blow up the school, could you at least have the good grace to do it when I’m out of earshot? I need plausible deniability, not a migraine.”

“Right!” Midoriya smiled apologetically. “It won’t happen again, sir!”

Powerloader sighed, “Let’s just get to work.”

Mineta kept himself quiet and unobtrusive as he walked into the support labs. Only an idiot would draw attention to themselves before they got the lay of the land and at least had a sense of who they were hunting. There were several students spread out between the tables, welding and soldering away at their own inventions, but Mineta wasn’t interested in them. Somehow he didn’t think that a kid with a giant shark head was Cheat Code...it seemed like something that would have come up in conversation. Even though he couldn’t be sure that the I-island incident was related to Cheat Code, it was still his best lead, which meant that he was looking for either *Hatsume* or *Midoriya.* Jiro had insinuated that he was only interested in Hatsume because she had big boobs, so..the one with pink hair. There wasn’t anyone with her, but from what his classmates had said, the two were never far apart, so Midoriya must be around here somewhere, it was only a matter of when he would show up.

Now that he had his target in sight, Mineta let his stare linger a bit too long in the right places and ran toward Hatsume’s station as quickly as he could, hardly even giving a glance to any of the boys in the room, not even the one with green hair who was leaning against the doorframe of a side room,looking at him suspiciously, most likely questioning his intentions toward Hatsume. Good. If the students thought he was looking at the girls, they’d never even guess that he was actually here to find Cheat Code.

He’d almost made it to Hatsume’s desk before the green haired kid called out to him, “Hello Mineta. Are you here to modify your costume?”

Mineta jumped. How did this kid know his name? He recovered quickly, though, putting on a smile as he glanced at Hatsume, “Yeah! I, uh, heard some of the others saying Hatsume was the best girl to go to.”

“You heard right!” Hatsume jumped to shake his hand, but the kid, who *had* to be Midoriya, was still looking at him suspiciously. “I’m the best inventor you’ll ever find and the future CEO of Hatsume industries. Nice to meet you!”

Mineta grinned, “I’m excited to see what you can do, hot stuff. Cheat Code gave us a lot of good suggestions.”

Midoriya’s expression changed slightly when Mineta mentioned Cheat Code. *Interesting…*

“Hmmm…” Midoriya pushed himself away from the doorframe and walked over to them, subtly placing himself in front of Hatsume. “Your quirk involves adhesion, right? What did you have in mind?”

Mineta stood his ground, “I dunno? Something super cool, definitely! I need to look like a badass.”

Hatsume pushed past Midoriya, “Then your current costume isn’t gonna cut it. I’ve seen the designs and it makes you look like a giant baby. And the fact that you cry during fights doesn’t help, so you’re gonna want to change that. I’d take out the white and the diaper just gets in the way, but we can keep the utility belt. Maybe we should add some sort of ranged weapon? Ooh, maybe something that can adjust the stickiness of your quirk? And with DNA incorporated into the suit, obviously. I know I had some designs a while ago, where did I put them…?”

About halfway through her ramblings, Hatsume had pulled out a stack of notebooks and started sorting through them for ideas, spreading old drawings and crumpled notes across her desk as Midoriya helped sort through them, muttering about the specifics of Mineta’s quirk under his breath. How did he know so much? He’d heard the guy was Nedzu’s personal student, so a certain amount of mystery was to be expected, but they’d never even met before!

Something on one of the pages caught his eye and Mineta sucked in a sharp breath. Was that…? He glanced over toward Midoriya and Hatsume, but they had both gotten caught up in brainstorming new gear ideas for him that they weren’t even looking his way, so Mineta subtly nudged the sketchbook the rest of the way open, his eyes widening slightly when he realized he was *right.*

Various versions of Cheat Code’s logo were spread across the page, all slightly different than the one that had appeared on their info packets, but considering that some of them were crossed out and others were

crammed in the margins, Minta assumed they must be in progress versions, which meant...Mineta glanced up at the duo, who were still chatting almost faster than any normal person could process. Which one was Cheat Code?

Quickly, Mineta grabbed one of the smaller balls from the nape of his neck and stuck it to the corner of the page. As soon as he was sure no one was watching, he tore the page and wrapped it around the ball before shoving it in his pocket. The page would be undamaged when the stickiness wore off, but if anyone questioned him before then, they'd inevitably try to tear the page off and ruin their evidence in the process. The timing was closer than he would have liked though, considering that Midoriya turned toward him as soon as the ball was safe inside Mineta's pocket, a huge smile on his face, "So? What do you think?"

Mineta squeezed the paper ball in his pocket, "I think you two are exactly what I need."

Somehow, being looped in on a secret as big as One for All was enough to break the ice between Hitoshi and his adults. Parents? He wasn't quite sure if he was ready to go that far, but whatever Shouta and Hizashi were to him, they were better than anything he'd ever had before. And finally hearing Shouta's real opinions on All Might was *hilarious.*

"I mean, seriously?" Shouta rolled his eyes. "There should be at least a committee deciding who gets such a powerful, not to mention dangerous, opportunity. Impulsivley putting a first year in a situation where she has to make a life-long decision and can't even really say no to the *privilege* was just idiotic, not to mention unethical, so no wonder she disappeared!"

Hitoshi grinned, "I'm pretty sure that has more to do with her quirk."

Shouta glared at him, "She didn't teleport for at least a week after getting that stupid power, which means she was probably repressing the power and it had no choice but to manifest dramatically. That wouldn't have happened if that blond oaf hadn't laid on all the pressure of a giant *legacy.* "

Hizashi smiled softly and rubbed his back, "Do you want to hide in one of the cupboards and jump scare him? That usually makes you feel better."

“I could probably have Mei-chan make a glitter bomb for you.” Hitoshi offered. “I know she’s building one already so they can prank Bakugo, but, uh...I should warn you that she’s still working on the formula. Last I heard, her design is more *bomb* than *glitter*. ”

“Oh?!” Hizashi perked up. “I could probably take a look over it! I made my fair share of glitter bombs and other pranks back in my days at UA. I’m pretty sure there’s still glitter in 3A’s classroom from that one time we…”

“That’s not something to be proud of.” Shouta cut in, but he was still smiling. “Your other pranks were much more effective.”

Hitoshi glanced between the two of them, “Why do I feel like I should be taking notes?”

Shouta grinned, “Because learning from the masters is only logical.”

“You?!” Hitoshi gave a shocked laugh. “Hizashi, I can see, but you?!”

Shouta shrugged, “There’s nothing wrong with a few logical ruses. You have to battle burnout somehow. Plus Hizashi was a bad example.”

“Hey!” Hizashi looked betrayed. “Do I need to remind you that the air horn tripwire in the cafeteria was *your* idea!”

Shouta frowned, “I thought that one was Shirakumo’s.”

Hizashi’s face fell, “oh...I guess it was. It’s been so long…”

His adults were silent for a long moment and Hitoshi was about to ask what was wrong when Hizashi shook himself out of it, “Well, little listener, I guess you’re wondering why we’re having your favorites for dinner tonight?”

Hitoshi looked at him suspiciously, “I thought you were just buttering me up so that I’d trust you or something.”

Shouta snorted, “Good thought, kid, but no. There’s more to it.”

“We’re celebrating!” Hizashi ran over to the counter to grab a manila envelope and shoved it into his hand. “Well? What are you waiting for? Open it!”

Hitoshi gave them a suspicious glance, but slowly opened the envelope and pulled out the piece of paper, “Is this….?”

“Our official foster license.” Shota answered. “Until now, you’ve technically been under emergency custody, but now, it’s official. Basically, it means we can keep custody of you without having to jump through hoops and call you a villain when you’re obviously going to be a hero.”

Hitoshi swallowed back some tears, his voice almost choking up, “...Oh. Ok.”

“Plus, Nedzu even pulled a few strings so that our emergency custody of you will still count toward the minimum time before adoption!” Hizashi grinned. “That means we can adopt you, like, at the beginning of next semester! Isn’t that so rockin?!”

“Assuming you want that.” Shouta cut in. “If you would prefer we not adopt you, that’s your right. You’ll still have a place with us, even if you don't want to go that far.”

“You…” Hitoshi looked up at them in shock. “You actually want to...but you’d be stuck with me!”

Shouta snorted, “More like you’d be stuck with us. Maybe it’s best if we don’t. I can’t imagine having that cockatoo over there as a dad!”

Hizashi stuck out his tongue, “Well I can’t imagine having a hobo caterpillar as one either!”

Hitoshi stifled a snicker, but smiled, “We...we’ll see. But, uh, you’d probably have to fight my kidnappers for custody.”

“What?” Hizashi flexed. “You think we can’t handle a couple of kids?”

Shouta raised one eyebrow, “Speak for yourself. If those two attack, you’re on your own. It’s only logical to surrender in the face of undeniable defeat.”

Hitoshi laughed. They’d almost definitely get sick of him before they were able to adopt him, but if they didn’t, then maybe...maybe being a part of a real family wouldn’t be too bad.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: August 4, 2021 (MDT)

Hints

Chapter Summary

The right people get the right information.

Chapter Notes

Art!
a smile better suits a hero X
CorporealEclectic

Memes!
X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku wrote down Ochako's current position as Hitoshi hurried through the tunnels. Even though they were all spread out throughout the school, Izuku had given them all comm links so that they could still communicate easily. He'd even given Mei one so she could still participate while she was fine tuning some new toys for Tensei's wheelchair outside in the lab while Izuku was on the computer in his workroom. If all went well, this experiment would both help Ochako improve her quirk and gather invaluable information on how warping worked so Izuku could use it to find a way to track Kurogiri.

"Your accuracy has improved a lot, ochako." Izuku rambled. "But I'm really curious about how much *control* you really have when you warp, so we need to test your limits!"

Izuku watched over the cameras as Ochako nodded, "That's why you're having Hitoshi hide, right? You want me to focus on finding my anchor."

"Kinda." Izuku hummed thoughtfully. "Assuming that you're actually warping gravity like we think you are, then what I really want to know is if you can appear *anywhere* your anchor's gravity is affecting. If you can, then theoretically, you might even be able to appear behind a combatant during a fight!"

"That would be convenient." Hitoshi drawled.

Izuku laughed, "Ueah, I thought so too. That's why Hitoshi is going to stay in the tunnels and you, Ochako, are going to try to end up in the

hallway outside, instead of in the tunn...no Ochako, I said *not* in the tunnel!"

"Sorry!" Ochako yelped. "I didn't mean to work, but I got distracted and...oh, sorry Hitoshi! Did I hurt you?"

Izuku stifled his laughter as he Ochako tried to untangle herself from Hitoshi. She had appeared pretty much directly on top of him, which wouldn't have been an issue if he had been crawling through one of the larger passages. Unfortunately for Hitoshi, he'd been crawling through a tunnel that barely had enough room for one…"

"Ocha...ow!" Hitoshi yelped. "You're elbowing me...maybe a little to the left? Just…"

"Sorry!" Ochako was really trying, but there really wasn't enough room in the tunnel to maneuver. "Uh...at least we know that I won't teleport *into* anything."

"Oh joy." Shinso deadpanned. "Because I *definitely* wanted to be closer to you than I am at the moment. Move your foot, you're kicking me! Izuku, stop laughing! This isn't funny!"

Izuku snickered again, "It kind of is, actually."

"Just have gravity girl teleport to somebody else." Mei suggested. "It's probably quicker than whatever gymnastics you two are trying to do."

Instantly both Hitoshi and Ochako stopped squirming, "...oh."

Izuku heard a thud as ochako landed on the floor by Mei's desk. Hitoshi glared around the tunnel, obviously looking for whatever camera Izuku was using to spy on them, "You couldn't have mentioned that earlier?"

"Nope!" Mei chirped. "Now get going! Izu-kun needs data for his program!"

"And try not to land on Hitoshi this time." Izuku added.

Ochako winced, "My bad."

She took a deep breath and Izuku was gathering all the data he could as she disappeared. There had to be some identifier that was unique to every teleporter, he just had to find it. By studying Ochako's jumps he could find her identifier and then *theoretically,* he should be able to

extrapolate that data and use it to find other teleporters. At the end of the day, to find Kurogiri, he just had to figure out what made him different from Ochako!

“Good Job Ochako, you’re just a few hallways away from your target.” Izuku hurried to write everything down before the next round. “Hitoshi, find a new position. Let’s do this again.”

“I really don’t know why you all find this so entertaining.” Shouto said calmly, his character getting eaten by a zombie yet again. “You’re just watching me die twenty times in a row.”

Shigaraki snorted, “We just like watching you make a fool out of yourself. It’s like watching a guy get hit in the nuts, it’s funny.”

“Wow…” Shouto deadpanned. “Maybe I should have streamed my childhood. You would have found it hilarious.”

Shigaraki rolled his eyes, “Is your old man letting you back in the door yet? It’s been a while since he kicked you out, right?”

“Oh, I can go back at any time,” Shouto shrugged, “but that would involve apologizing to him, so no thank you.”

As odd as it was to talk about his family life with a villain, it was actually one of his favorite parts of the whole thing. Their watchers didn’t seem to care what they talked about, more focusing on how they interacted rather than what the content of their conversations, so they mostly just talked about about whatever. They had to avoid any topics that were too closely linked to their idenitities, which meant that Shouto didn’t get any info on the league’s movements and Shigaraki didn’t get any info on UA, but Shouto had enjoyed having a place ot share his conspiracy theories, so he didn’t mind too much. It was kinda fun actually.

“You’re really choosing to sleep in an alley when you could be in a bed?” Shigaraki asked. “You must be crazier than I am.”

Shouto shrugged, “It’s not too bad. I probably need a job, though. My sister taught me how to use a laundromat, but the money the old man gave me when he kicked me out is almost gone. Then again, he was planning on me crawling back after less than a week, so whatever.”

Shigaraki gave him a look, “You *do* realize you already have a job, right?”

Shouto frowned, “Are you talking about my internship? That was only a week and I didn’t get paid…”

“Ugh, you are such a noob.” Shigaraki huffed. “We make money from streaming you know. If you need more we can start a merch line or something. I’m sure at least some of these npcs would pay for a sweatshirt or something.”

Shouto blinked, “Oh...cool.”

Shigaraki rolled his eyes, “You’re hopeless...what is up with the chat? Why are you all going so crazy?!”

“Hmm….” Shouto frowned and scanned some of the messages. “Apparently they’re concerned about my childhood. And yours.”

“Why? I had a great childhood after Sensei saved me.” Shigaraki paused the game and looked through the chat. “What are they freaking out about? Your childhood wasn’t that weird.”

Shouto shrugged, “I mean, it was *kinda* bad. Most people’s parents don’t hit them trying to make them into the perfect child.”

Maybe he shouldn’t be saying this, but it wasn’t like anyone was ever going to find out who he was, so maybe he was a little careless. Whatever. It was just one more thing that would piss his dad off. Plus, Shigaraki already hated Endeavor like he hated all heroes, so he wouldn’t make a big deal of it.

Instead of shrugging his comment off like usual, however, Shigaraki kept the game paused and stared at him in confusion, “They don’t?”

Shouto shrugged, “I wouldn’t really know, but I don’t think so. Most parents see their kids as kids rather than *successors.* ”

Shigaraki huffed and unpaused the game, “Oh, you're just trying to prank me, that makes sense. I’m gonna kill you for that.”

Shouto raised an eyebrow, “In game or in real life? I mean, you’ve tried both already, so…”

“I’m not gonna kill my streaming partner, you idiot.” Shigaraki snapped. “Seriously, why is the chat still going crazy? How many people did you get in on this stupid prank IcyCat?”

“Nobody.” Shouto said, reading through the chat as his character died

again. “But from what they’re saying, I think we both had messed up childhoods. Did your Sensei treat you like a masterpiece?”

“Yeah, but that’s what a parent’s supposed to do.” Shigaraki started scratching at his throat. “Sensei needed to train me to carry on his legacy.”

“Did he give you a choice?” Shouto asked. “Because I’m sleeping in an alley rather than be forced to further my old man’s legacy. And according to...well, *everyone* , apparently, it’s just us.”

Shigaraki scratched a little harder, “Shut up! Just...you’re lying!”

“No.” Shouto shook his head sympathetically. “We’re not, but we can drop it if you want. Let’s just play the game.”

Shigaraki growled, “That’s the only smart thing you’ve said all stream.”

Mineta handed the paper over to Kurogiri, who looked at it with an unreadable expression, “Where did you find this?”

“In the support labs, like All for One suggested.” Mineta said. “I’ve narrowed Cheat Code down to two students.”

Kurogiri nodded, “And you haven't captured them yet because…?”

“Because if they disappear right after I visited them, it ties their disappearance back to me.” Mineta glared at him. “And if you hadn’t noticed, I’m not an idiot.”

“No need to be so hostile.” Kurogiri dismissed. “Just make sure you don’t cause unnecessary delays to Sensei’s plans.”

Mineta rolled his eyes, “Again, I’m not an idiot. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have better things to do.”

Kurogiri sighed, “One more thing, Trapper. Now that Spinner is gaining some popularity as Stain’s successor, it would be beneficial for him to acknowledge his connection to us. We need to add more power to ranks if we expect to fulfill Sensei’s vision.”

“Don’t worry.” Mineta didn’t flinch away from Kurogiri’s gaze. “I’ll make it happen.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: August 11, 2021 (MDT)

Apologies: Mental break after Viridian is taking longer than expected.

At the latest, Next Update: August 18, 2021 (MDT)

Stars

Chapter Summary

Somebody plants a glitter bomb

Chapter Notes

Art!
Mossy
ash
Vail X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki was impressed with how well he was ignoring his tag-along group of extras, considering how loud they were. Still, despite his best attempts he somtimes found himself almost laughing at Kaminari's stupid jokes or getting hyped up by Kirishima's pep talks. That had never happened with those dumb lackeys from middle school, and Katsuki wasn't quite sure how to feel about it. He was going to be the best, so these guys should be nothing to him...right?

He let Mina's latest rant about the local love triangles go in one ear and out the other as he opened his locker, immeidately flinching and jumping back as something shimmery exploded out of it, covering him from head to toe, "Fuck!"

To his surprise, instead of helping him, Mina started giggling, "Oh my god, Bakguo! You just got glitter bombed!"

"Actually…" Sero drawled, "I think we all did. We were standing a little too close to him, I guess."

Katsuki swore and wiped glitter out of his eyes so he could look around. Even though he'd taken the brunt of the attack, there were patches of glitter all over Mina, Sero, Kaminari and Kirishima. His hands were heating up to explode whoever had *dared* pull this when Kirishima started laughing his head off, "Guys! We match!"

Kaminari was grinning just as widely as he fished his phone out of his pocket, "We gotta take a picture of this! Come on! Everybody get in!"

“Fuck no!” Katsuki tried to back away, but Mina and Kirishima had already grabbed his arms and were pulling him into the huddle. “You guys are idiots!”

“We gotta put Baku-bro in the middle!” Kirishima insisted. “He’s the main attacration.”

He scowled, but let the others push him into position as he glared at the camera. These extras were just weird. If this had happened in elementary school, Deku would have immediately started trying to clean him off and just generally being an annoyance, but these guys just brushed it off and started laughing. It was like they knew he could handle a little bit of glitter and they trusted him not to start crying or whatever just because he was a little sparkly right now. Katsuki was definitely still going to find whoever did this and make them pay, but...well, these extras had the right idea. He just had to be stronger than a little bit of glitter.

Present Mic peeked around the corner and grinned, “Nice coverage, you managed to hit, like, five different targets. You kids did good.”

Hitoshi blushed, “It was mostly Mei and Izuku. I’m super glad we talked her out of including actual explosives though, thanks.”

“It’s just about being open minded to other methods...and listening to people with more experience than you!” Mic winked. “Hatsume totally perfected me and Shou’s old design though! That was awesome!”

“I still can’t believe that you and Da...you and Aizawa used to be pranksters in high school.” Hitoshi shook his head. “Uh, I’d probably better get to class. I don’t want to look too guilty when Bakugo comes exploding in.”

Mic had a small, proud smile on his face as he nodded and pushed Hitoshi away down the hall, “See ya later, kiddo!”

Hitoshi nodded, “Yeah. I’ll, uh, see ya at home.”

Ochako wanted to say that she was surprised when Mina came running into the classroom covered in glitter, but she really wasn’t. Mei and Izuku didn’t do anything halfway, so Ochako had honestly expected Bakugo’s glitter bomb to coat the entire hallway. Actually, the fact that Mina’s body was only half covered was actually an example of incredible restraint!

What Ochako *should* have expected was that Mina would immediately grin and run around the room hugging everyone in sight, “Glitter for everyone!!!!”

“Whoa!” Momo’s eyes widened as Mina ran into her arms. “Um…hi? What happened?”

Kaminari ran in and immediately made a beeline toward Jiro, “Somebody planted a glitter bomb in Bakugo ‘s locker! It was awesome!”

“Don’t you dare, Kaminari!” Jiro dodged his hug smoothly, “Don’t get it on me! Go away!”

She was so focused on Kaminari that she didn’t notice Mina behind her until it was too late, “Come on, Jiro, don’t be like that! Embrace the glitter!”

“Oui!” Aoyama grinned and accepted Kaminari’s hug with open arms. “We must all sparkle like the stars!”

Todoroki didn’t even flinch when Mina hugged him, “I suppose I have no choice but to accept my fate.”

Tokoyami nodded sagely, “Even the dark void of space has its stars.”

By this point, Sero and Kirishima had already come in and joined in the mission to infect the entire classroom with glitter. Ochako was desperately trying to smother her giggles, but she apparently didn’t do a good enough job at it because Mina suddenly turned to her with fire in her eyes, “Your turn Ochako!”

Ochako squealed and teleported away, only for Kaminari to try to get her when she reappeared. Soon enough everyone was laughing and playing an impromptu game of glitter tag in the classroom. The only one not really participating was Bakugo, who was covered with more glitter than any of them. Ochako had honestly expected him to explode, and at multiple points he seemed about to, but every time he did, either Mina or Kirishima would go up to him to *reload,* as Sero called it, and he’d take a deep breath and calm down. It was almost disappointing, but it let the rest of the class enjoy their game and resulted in far less destruction of property, so it was probably for the best.

Ochako had just recovered from another warp when Hitoshi walked into the room, eyes widening as he saw the chaos, “What’s going on?!”

Mina took full advantage of her distraction and grinned, catching her in a bear hug, “Gotcha!!!”

Hitoshi just blinked, “Uh…”

Ochako shrugged with a smile, teleported to right behind him and wrapped her arms around his waist, “Sorry, Shindig, if I have to suffer, so do you.”

Hitoshi just sighed.

Shouta looked over his class, regretting every decision he’d made to get him to his point. Apparently instead of going to shower after getting glitter bombed like any rational person would do, Bakugo and his friends had decided to see how many students they could infect. The answer was all of them. Every single one of his students had glitter all over them and there was absolutely no chance that Hitoshi would allow him to leave here unscathed.

He groaned and rubbed his eyes. May as well turn it into a training exercise.

“Yaoyorozu.” Shouta sighed. “Make double sided stickers for everyone, please. Just a six inch circle will do, as long as both sides are adhesive.”

Yoyorozu nodded in confusion and started making them. The Iida brothers immediately jumped on the task of handing them out, which was a struggle on it’s own, considering that Tensei had apparently decided that the best way to do that was to treat them as frisbees and Tenya was desperately trying to stop his brother from throwing things in the classroom. Why had he signed up for this?

“Does everyone have one?” Shouta looked around and nodded. “Good, now peel the backing on one side and stick it somewhere on your body.”

The class looked confused but did as they were told and soon enough, everyone had a giant sticker on them and they all looked to him for further instruction. This was going to be entertaining and at the very least it would distract him from the meeting he was dreading tonight.

“Now take off the backing on the other side.” Shouta instructed. “Now the rules: As soon as I call start, the game is on. Do not disturb other classes. Focus on stealth. You can team up if you want, but there is

only going to be one winner. The student with the least amount of glitter on their sticker at the end of the time wins. Go."

Souta smirked as his students immediately jumped into action. At least they'd learned not to wait for countdowns.

Izuku was peacefully minding his own business, working on his program, when he heard Kohaku shouting in the lab outside, "Don't track it in here!"

"What's it matter?" Powerloader complained. "Hatsume already covered half the testing rooms in teh stuff while making that stupid bomb."

"Meh, it's biodegradable, it'll be fine!" Mei said cheerfully. "Everything will just be sparkly for a little while."

Izuku frowned and went out, "Is Katsuki here….oh."

Ochako smiled sheepishly, a light coating of glitter all over her, except for a weirdly clean circle on her arm, "Apparently Bakugo and his friends can match you guys in pettiness. Aizawa even made it a training exercise!"

"You're only excited about that because you won." Hitoshi complained. "It's no fair when you can just teleport away from whoever is targeting you!"

Ochako rolled her eyes, "Like you didn't brainwash most of the class into leaving you alone."

Hitoshi glared at her, "I should have brainwashed them into going after you!"

Izuku giggled, "I'm glad you guys had fun...sorry, I guess we kinda thought Katsuki would just storm off and take a shower."

"Next time we'll figure out how to get it to stick only to him!" Mei grinned. "Glitter bomb 2.0 here we come!"

"It wasn't a big deal, it was good training." Hitoshi shrugged. "That was a lot of warps though, Ochako. Are you feeling ok?"

Ochako shrugged, "I'm a little nauseous, but nothing I can't handle. I need to get used to it anyway, since I'll be making longer jumps once I move home this weekend. Oh, that reminds me, can you guys come

over and help out? I've teleported with small objects before, so carrying the boxes back and forth shouldn't' be a big deal, but uh...well I kinda just don't want to do it alone."

Izuku grinned and nodded, "I can bring my laptop and get data on all your jumps! It'll be interesting to see if the extra weight from the boxes changes how you teleport!"

Ochako sighed, "I just wish you guys could actually meet my parents."

"Why can't we?" Mei was already turning back to the next invention on her table. "People are objects too, right?"

Izuku blinked, then smiled slowly, "I guess we have a new experiment to run!"

Shigaraki was already streaming by the time Shouto got to the alley they streamed from. It wasn't the best streaming set up, but considering it was pretty much the only neutral ground they had, they somehow made it work. He hadn't showered after class, since that would have made him miss the whole stream, but they never turned their cameras on, so he didn't think being covered in glitter would be a big deal until Shigaraki turned to him and froze, "What the hell happened to you?"

Shouto rolled his eyes and put on the headphones Shigaraki had given him to stream with, "Long story short, one of my classmates got glitter bombed and my teacher turned attacking each other with glitter into an assignment."

Shigaraki scoffed, "Your teacher really is super cool."

Shouto just raised one eyebrow, "I'm not sure if that's a compliment. Didn't you just try to kill him a couple months ago?"

"Meh, he wasn't my target." Shigaraki rolled his eyes as the chat all played along with what they thought was just a running joke. It wasn't, but they weren't going to correct anyone who thought they were just kidding. "Oh no, the cat's gonna be covered with the stuff, isn't she?"

"Not if she doesn't sit in my lap this time…" Shouto trailed off as Epurr jumped off one of the trash cans and immediately started rolling around in his lap. "Yeah, she's gonna be one sparkly cat."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: Aug 23, 2021

Spinner

Chapter Summary

What to do about the hero killer?

Chapter Notes

Art!
viridenki: trouble magnet
matt is typing…….
Beaumains1 X
Katsucurry
a smile better suits a hero

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta wasn't late to the meeting, but he wasn't early either. By the time he finally managed to get the majority of the glitter out of his hair and change into a new uniform, pretty much everyone was already cramped into the secure conference room Tsukauchi had reserved. Edgeshot and Best Jeanist were the only other heroes present, but the hero commission had also sent Mera over so that they could stay updated. The hero killer wasn't something that the commission could afford to ignore.

Tsukauchi looked up as Shouta sat down in one of the empty chairs, "Thanks for taking the time to come, Eraser. I know your class keeps you pretty busy."

"The hero killer has a connection to at least two of my students." Shouta said tersely. "It's only logical for me to want to be involved in whatever the hell is happening, if only to keep my students safe and in line."

Jeanist raised an eyebrow, "You don't think the Iida brothers will try going after this new hero killer, do you? They're not nearly recovered enough to even *think*…"

"Ingenium is a good hero." Edgeshot interrupted. "I wouldn't underestimate how fast he can get back on his...well, you know what I mean."

“I think they both have a long way to go.” Shouta said firmly. “And while we’re working on Tenya’s anger issues as much as we can, if Stain somehow survived or spawned a successor, I can’t say I trust him to not go rogue again.”

“Well, we can confidently say that Stain himself did not survive.” Tsukauchi started handing out files. “We double checked the body and the autopsy. We also asked around and it seems everyone is in agreement: Stain was killed by a shadow villain who goes by the name of Trapper.”

Mera sighed as he looked over the photes, “You do realize that makes it worse, right?”

Shouta nodded, “The new hero killer has shown evidence of having Blood Curdle, STain’s quirk, right? Do you think the league might be involved? It’s possible this new hero killer is some kind of Nomu. It would explain his single mindedness at the very least.”

“Our current theory is that the new hero killer, Spinner, is most likely an illegitimate child of Stain’s or at least some blood relation.” Tsukauchi explained. “That’s pretty much the only way that he would have the same quirk, so that’s what we’re working off of right now.”

Shouta looked at him skeptically, “Stain was obsessed. You really think he had any time or desire or a relationship?”

“It could have been a one night stand?” Edgeshot suggested.

“Still unlikely.” Shouta rolled his eyes. “I knew him for years. Even if he *wanted* that, which I doubt, no woman in their right mind would go for it.”

“That doesn’t automatically mean he’s a nomu.” Jeanist pointed out. “But in the end, our main concern shouldn’t be how he got his quirk but what he does with it. Spinner has killed in a month almost as many as Stain killed in ten years. He’s a spree killer, which means that he was most likely highly lacking in mental stability when he started his kill streak and what little balance he had is long gone by now.”

“We at the commission agree.” Mera yawned. “He hasn’t confirmed any connection to the league, so we’ll cross that bridge when it comes to it. For now, we just need to worry about stopping him.”

Look, Tomura apparently wasn’t sure of a lot of things in his life, but

if there was anything he *was* sure of, it was that this lizard guy was crazy. Then again, maybe he didn't really have any room to talk...but at least he shut up sometimes. Spinner hadn't hardly taken a breath since he'd started rambling about his precious *Stain.* The guy was obsessed. Was this how Tomura sounded when he talked about Sensei? No wonder the chat had been concerning. This was annoying!

Spinner started repeating himself again and Tomura groaned, "So, like, are we actually gonna do this raid, or…?"

Trapper rolled his eyes and Tomura seriously wondered where that little twerp hid all the audacity. Sure, Sensei liked him and Tomura had to admit that he was actually a semi-decent spy, but like, he was sticky and two faced, so Tomura tried not to spend more time with him than he had to and left most of the necessary communication to Kurogiri. But hey, if Trapper was willing to be responsible for Spinner, then that meant Tomura didn't have to do it and it was worth keeping him around. For now.

"Yes!" Spinner slashed Stain's katana in midair a few times before sheathing it. "Let's go kill some fase heroes."

"That's pretty much everybody." Tomura muttered under his breath, but followed Spinner and Trapper through the portal. He really preferred solo missions, usually, since his teammates more often than not just pissed him off, but apparently this was essential to linking Spinner to the league. Why they'd want to be linked to yet another crazy person, Tomura didn't know, but whatever, Sensei had a plan and he was smarter than the rest of them so it had to be a good one. Hopefully. Unless Todoroki was right and Sensei was just using him...Tomura shook his head. Stupid chat distracting him and making things more complicated than they were. Sensei cared for him. Why would he have saved him if he didn't care about him?

Tomura ignored the million and a half ridiculous answers that came to mind and flexed his hands as he looked around. Trapper and Spinner had already disappeared up the walls and Tomura cursed as he realized he was the only one left out in the open. Of course he had the lowest stealth stat of everyone. Was Trapper trying to use him as bait or something? Oh, he'd make that stupid little twerp regret ever…

"Yeah, and like, it was totally unfair, you know?" Mt. Lady's voice echoed through the alley and Tomura shrunk back into the shadows that were growing in the twilight.

There were three of them, just like Trapper had said there would be. Mt. Lady, Kamui Woods, and Death Arms, none of which were very high ranking, but Tomura supposed that most of the top heroes usually worked alone and Trapper had been looking for a group. The three heroes walked through the alley, chatting idly on their way to dinner or wherever they normally went after their shift, completely unaware of Trapper landing behind them and setting up an entire minefield of his sticky balls at the entrance. When he disappeared into the shadows again, Tomura took that as his cue and strolled into the light, “Hello *heroes.”*

All three of them stopped and took fighting stances, but Kamui was the first to attack, shooting one of his branches forward, “You’re one of the villains that attacked UA!”

Tomura rolled his eyes as he dodged and grabbed the branch, disintegrating it into dust, “Yeah, that was game over a while ago. I had to respawn and start over.”

He strode forward again, which made Mount Lady instinctively take a step back right onto one of the sticky traps. Her eyes widened when her foot didn’t move like expected, but she’d already shifted her weight and she went down hard, landing on enough of the balls to stick her entire body to the ground, “It’s a trap! Wait...”

“Of course it is.” Death Arms muttered and grabbed a dumpster, lifting it above his head. “They’re villains, so I’m not surprised they’ll sink this low...ow!”

Death Arms dropped, the weight of the dumpster pinning him to the ground as the paralyzation set in. Spinner’s sharp tooth smile almost glowed in the darkness as he licked the blood off his lips and crawled off the dumpster, “It looks like we’ve caught two false heroes already! Stain would be proud!”

Kamui gasped and sent his branches to wrap around Spinner, “You’re the new hero killer! You’re despicable!”

“So are you!” Spinner hissed and started hacking through the branches with his Katana. “Fake heroes like you are unworthy of the title! You make me sick!”

Trapper shot him a look from the shadows and Tomura huffed before reluctantly rushing forward and distigrating Kamui’s remaining branches, which was enough of an opening for Spinner to lunge forward and nick him with the Katana. Two seconds later, he licked

the blood off the blade with a crazed look in his eyes and Kamui fell to the floor, “And that makes three.”

“Spinner, you finish off Death Arms, not that he’ll give you much trouble, since that Dumpster already probably broke half his bones.” Trapper strode forward, pulling out his knife. “Shigaraki, you take Kamui Woods.”

“Don’t tell me what to do!” Tomura snapped.

“M-Mineta?” Mt. Lady actually sounded genuinely distressed, but maybe that was just because she couldn’t move. “I…when I saw the balls….”

“Don’t both trying to use your quirk.” Trapper cut her off. “This alley is way too small and there’s a park nearby that will get all the dust and asbestos if you destroy these buildings on either side. Actually, I’m pretty sure my balls sticking you to the floor will prevent you from growing anyway, but best not to risk it, right?”

There was a small grunt and Spinner started licking blood off his blade. Mt. Lady had tears in her eyes as she looked up at Trapper, “Is this because of the internship? I swear, I can be a better mentor just…”

“I only interned with you because you were ditzy enough not to notice when I disappeared for hours on end.” Trapper knelt down beside her. “Although, being able to memorize your patrol schedule was an added perk.”

As Trapper finished her off, Tomura turned back to Kamui, who was staring at him stubbornly. He reached forward, but stopped a half inch away from Kamui’s face. Did he actually *want* to kill him? Did he actually enjoy killing at all? Sensei said he did, but if he asked Endeavor, he’d probably say that Todoroki enjoyed training and they both knew that wasn’t true. Was he killing Kamui because he actually hated him and wanted to destroy him or was he killing Kamui because it was what would make Sensei happy?

“What’s the hold up, Shigaraki?” Spinner hissed. “Kill him already?”

Tomura snatched his hand back and swallowed, “Nah, he’s not worth the attack points. Low Level enemies like him don’t piss me off enough.”

Trapper narrowed his eyes questioningly, but Tomura didn’t flinch as

he stubbornly turned his back. Why had he done that?! Why hadn't he just killed him?! Without thinking he reached out to hit the wall, disintegrating a large chunk right out of it. So much for self control...

"Lucky for you, false heroes piss me off more than enough!" Spinner sliced with his Katana and it was over in half a second. "Now, we're done here, right?"

"Almost." Trapper answered, taking out a spray bottle. "I just need to...modify the evidence."

Tsukauchi's face hardened as he read through the briefing one of his officers had just handed him, "A crime scene was just found that links Spinner, Trapper, and the league. It's time to cross that bridge."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: August 30, 2021 (MDT)

Opportunity

Chapter Summary

A completely normal day.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki felt kinda helpless and wasn't quite sure what to do about it. He glanced over at Todoroki and quickly looked away before he could get caught. He hadn't *meant* to find out that his classmate was homeless and making enough money to eat by streaming with who Denki strongly suspected was that crusty villain from the USJ, but he sometimes just liked to have gaming streams on in the background and he'd seen that these two new guys were trending and it was pretty hilarious to watch Icy Cat just fail over and over again as Dusty roasted him and he'd kinda thought that their voices sounded a little familiar, but he watched a bunch of these streams so while it was kinda weird, he didn't really obsess over it until he was trying to get some of the stupid glitter off his backpack and Icy Cat described *exactly* what had happened in class that day, right down to Aizawa making it a class exercise and everything fell into place. Of course, after he realized that Todoroki was Icy Cat, that meant that Dusty was Shigaraki and all those jokes about Dusty trying to kill Icy Cat weren't jokes at all, they were actually true and why was Todoroki voluntarily hanging out with an actual villain who had actually, really, 100% tried to kill him?!

Was it just that he was homeless and had nowhere else to turn to? Why was he homeless in the first place? He'd mentioned something about his dad kicking him out and then him being too stubborn to apologize and move back in, but wasn't his dad Endeavor? Why would Endeavor kick out his own son? Was it safe for him back at home or was he safer...well, considering he was hanging with Shigaraki, he probably wasn't *safe* anywhere.

Denki knew that he should probably tell the police, but, like, snitching on his classmate, not to mention one of his favorite streamers, just kinda felt...icky? Like, Shouto obviously didn't want to go back home,

but if the police found out, then they'd probably send him right back and that would kinda suck. But it wasn't like Shouto was *telling* Shigaraki anything, right? Beyond vague hints, they never really talked about their lives on stream, otherwise Denki would have figured it out a while ago, so it wasn't like the league was gathering info on them or anything, right? Still, he should do *something,* shouldn't he?

He bit his lip as their friends finished packing up their stuff for lunch, "Hey guys, uh...why don't we invite Todoroki to eat with us?"

Sero's eyes widened, "Are we sure we want to keep adopting the scary ones? I mean, the only one who's scarier than Todoroki is Bakugo and we've already got him in the bag."

"What did you say, Soy Sauce Face?!" Bakugo's hands popped threateningly, but Mina just patted him on the shoulder.

"Just because he doesn't emote much doesn't mean he's scary." She argued. "I say we do it! Gotta catch 'em all!"

Bakugo looked like he was about to burst a blood vessel, "We're not fucking pokemon!"

"Nah, but if you were, you'd both be fire types!" Kirishima grinned. "That means you'll be great friends. Hey Todoroki! Wanna eat lunch with us?"

Todoroki looked a bit surprised, obviously, but after a long moment of staring at them blankly, he just shrugged, "Ok."

Sero blinked in surprise, "Whoa, that was easy."

Bakugo quietly simmered while they waited in line for their food, but even though he was obviously not *happy,* he didn't explode, so Denki counted that as a win. As for Todoroki, the rest of the group wasn't really sure what to do with him, but Mina was just rambling as usual as Kirishima encouraged her, so it was almost normal until Todoroki actually joined in on the conversation.

Mina had been talking about punting Mineta into the sun, which was a pretty usual topic for her, when Todoroki, completely deadpan said, "I don't think that's wise. We don't want the sun getting indigestion."

Almost immediately, everyone stopped walking. Todoroki just blinked and looked at them, "What?"

“Nothing dude.” Sero grinned. “We just didn’t know you actually had a sense of humor!”

Kirishima nodded, “Yeah, dude. Totally manly!”

Denki wasn’t quite sure why he was surprised. Obviously, *he* was familiar with Todoroki’s weird sense of humor. It was like, half the reason he was such a popular streamer, but for some reason Denki had just kinda assumed it was just for the stream. Like Icy Cat was a character Todoroki played and not actually who he was, but like, no. Todoroki was acting the exact same right now as he would during a stream and it was kinda trippy.

Eventually, they all got their food and sat down and Sero turned to Todoroki, “So dude, you’ve actually been using your fire and stuff in class. It kinda sucks, you know? We couldn't beat you before, but now it’s just ridiculous.”

Todoroki slurped at his noodles, “I’m still trying to get the hang of my flames. I was trying to spite my father by not using my fire at all, but now I’m going to spite him by stealing it back. Pretty simple if you ask me.”

“Whoa.” Bakugo scoffed. “You really hate your old man, don’t you?”

“Yes.” Todoroki nodded simply. “He’s a bastard.”

Kirishima snorted so hard that the soda he was drinking shot out of his nose and everyone started laughing. Todoroki looked mildly concerned, but Kirishima just waved him away, “Nah, man, I’m good. If you’re looking to improve your fire, though, I’m sure you’re super stoked about those packets Cheat Code gave us.”

Todoroki frowned, “A conversation would be more helpful. The packets can be annoyingly vague.”

“Just ask Ochako to introduce you.” Mina piped up. “You know how she had that weird blank packet? Well, she’s totally been improving anyway. Everytime we try to ask her about it, she either laughs us off or teleports away, but, like, I’m 90% sure at this point that she actually knows the guy. Shinso probably does too, because he’s acting just as suspicious.”

Todorki hummed thoughtfully, “That...I might have to ask them then.”

Denki frowned. Sure, he was 90% sure that Todoroki wasn’t actually

giving any information to the league, but like, that wasn't 100% and if he found out who Cheat Code was…

He really should probably tell someone.

Tenya stood and watched Tensei as they waited for Artiste. They had figured out that she actually taught part time at UA, so it wasn't a big deal for her to come teach them, but Tenya felt an obligation to apologize for making her take time out of her day. He should probably also apologize to Cementoss, who had taken the cement training room and turned it into a beginner skate park. Tensei had wasted no time in exploring, almost giving Tenya a heart attack as he immediately tried to take his wheelchair over a jump. Seriously? Didn't he know he could get hurt again if he did that?

Thankfully, Tensei had started just rolling down some of the hills, which didn't seem *quite* as dangerous, so Tenya just quietly watched, ready to run forward and help at a moment's notice. He was just about to try to stop Tensei from going toward the jumps again when the door to the training room opened and Artiste glided in.

"Hello boys!" She sang out. "I hear I'm here to teach you how to use those wheels!"

"Hey Artiste!" Tensei grinned and waved, trying to use one hand to wheel himself closer. "Long time no see!"

"Tensei!" Tenya hissed. "Don't be rude!"

"I'm not being rude!" Tensei defended. "Just because I'm a little more casual than your preference doesn't mean I'm being rude!"

Tenya scowled, "You can't just…"

"Ahem!" Artiste interrupted them with a glare.

Immediately, Tenya dropped into a low bow, "My apologies for my brother's presumptuousness, ma'am. We know you're talking time out of your already busy schedule for us and we are eternally grateful…"

"Now let's get one thing straight." Artiste interrupted firmly. "I like all of my classes to be a safe space, so that means we have to be comfortable with one another and *that* means stop bowing and apologizing for things that don't need apologies. Got it?"

Tenya straightened immediately, “Uh…”

“In addition,” Artiste cut him off before he could argue, “None of that *ma’am* stuff. You will not call me *miss,* you will not call me *professor,* you will not even call me Artiste. When we’re here learning, I’m *Hina* and nothing else, ok?”

Tenya opened and shut his mouth a few times, not able to think of anything to say until Tensei laughed and gave their teacher finger guns. *Finger guns.* “You got it, Hina!”

“What?! No!” Tenya sputtered. “You’re our teacher! Referring to you by your first name is entirely inappropriate and…”

“And I’m the teacher, so that means I’m in control here!” Artiste laughed. “Aizawa warned me you were a bit stiff, but my goal here is to foster creativity, not *manners.* ” She wrinkled her nose in disgust. “If you’re too worried about the rules, you’ll never break them!”

“That’s…”Tenya felt like he was having an aneurysm. “Isn’t that the point?”

“Of course not, now let me finish!” Artiste had a twinkle in her eye. “If you never break the rules, then you can never create something *new* and *wonderful* ! Now, wouldn’t that be just tragic?”

“I…” Tenya bowed again, “I apologize, I hadn’t thought…”

Tensei cuffed him over the head, “Kiddo, didn’t she *just* tell you not to bow anymore?”

“Oh, right.” Tenya straightened. “I am so sorry.”

Artiste rolled her eyes, “Eh, we’ll get there eventually. That’s what it means to just keep rolling along, right?”

She shifted her feet and spun in a circle, then proceeded to skate circles around them, navigating the hills, jumps and ramps like they were nothing. She bent down and tenya saw her grab a piece of chalk from the bag on her hip. Soon enough, she was drawing long, flowing lines all around them. Tenya followed her movements as best she could but it all just seemed so...impossible. Maybe Ashindo could learn to move like that, but he was a runner, not a dancer. After a minute, Artiste spun to a stop and wiped her forehead with the back of her hand, leaving a smear of multi-colored chalk dust across her face. Then she gave them a wink and knelt down to touch the ground.

All of a sudden, vines started growing from her drawings, completely blocking the walls and boxing them in with thick thorns and flowers.

“As you can see,” Artiste grinned, “it pays to keep an open mind. My quirk is limited by the size and quantity of my drawings, but have you ever tried to draw while running?! It’s a nightmare! Even if fighting in roller skates is a bit nontraditional, some might even say it’s breaking the rules, it helps me make smoother lines and gives me the freedom I need to make larger drawings. There are challenges, of course, but with a little creative rule breaking, you’ll be able to figure out how to roll around all those little bumps in the road. You boys ready to get started?”

Tenya nodded politely, but tensei had a different idea, cheering and whooping as he clapped, completely undeterred by the fact that he was the only one making any noise. It was all Tenya could do not to die from embarrassment.

To his surprise, though, rather than being mortified, Artiste smiled, “That’s the spirit! Now let’s get started, shall we?” She clapped her hands and the vines disappeared into a shower of chalk dust. “Cementoss has been kind enough to set this place up into an amazing skate park, but you guys already know the basics, so let’s get a little creative!”

She grabbed a piece of paper from her pocket and tapped it, making a tennis ball drop onto the floor. She caught it on the first bounce and threw it as hard as she could against the wall, “Your job is to bring me that ball, but let’s break the rules a little bit while we’re at it.” She smiled mischievously, “You can’t move in a straight line.”

Mineta finished setting his trap and moved to his perch on top of the building while he dialled Kurogiri. From what he’d seen on the maps, this would be the perfect spot to catch that Midoriya kid on his way home from school. There were a few different routes that he could take, but they all converged ehre at one point or another, so even if he switched his routine, he’d almost definitely have to pass by Mineta to get home. A quick call to Powerloader about his costume had been enough to confirm that both Midoriya and Hatsume ahd already left the school, so it was only a matter of time until he could spring his trap.

Mineta still wasn’t quite sure if Midoriya really was Cheat Code, since Hatsume could have easily accomplished any of the tricks that Cheat

Code pulled at the USJ, but the fact that Midoriya was Nedzu's personal student swayed the suspicions in his favor. Mineta was obviously still skeptical, since the guy didn't even have a quirk to back him up, but if Nedzu thought he was the real deal, then…well, Mineta could at least give him the benefit of the doubt and he'd act as good bait if Hatsume was Cheat Code instead.

Kurogiri picked up on the fourth ring and Mineta didn't even bother saying hello, "Be waiting for my call. As soon as I nab my target, I'll be needing a pickup. I'm sure Sensei will want to meet him as soon as possible.

"Hmm, so you're capturing Cheat Code today, I gather." Kurogiri said boredly. "I suppose I should wish you luck then."

Mineta scowled and hung up, "I don't need his stupid luck. Who does that oversized cloud think he is, underestimating me?"

He shoved the phone in his pocket and popped one of the balls off his head in anticipation. He'd show them that he wasn't just some child that they could ignore and push aside. He'd *make* them take him seriously. He'd catch Cheat Code and present the guy to Sensei as proof that he wasn't somebody they wanted to mess with.

Mineta took a deep breath. All that was left to do now was wait for his prey.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: September 6, 2021 (MDT)

Luck

Chapter Summary

Ochako gets some quirk practice!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Dandy the Vicious
GuardianSoul X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi huffed as he carried another box out into the living room, “You know, Ocha, you really could be using your quirk to make this easier.”

“Oh don’t be such a wuss extra-credit-kun!” Mei rolled her eyes as she carried two boxes in her arms and used drones to carry two more in the air above her head, “Just think of it as muscle training. Aren’t your parents always saying you need more of that anyway?”

“My *adults* are monsters.” Hitoshi scowled. “They’ve both been pros for, like, a decade, so they’ve had ten years to build that muscle. I’ve only really been exercising for a couple months, so of course I look like a weakling compared to them.”

“All the...more reason...to lift boxes.” Izuku panted. “Ochako, please tell me we’re about done with packing.”

Ochako walked in with two boxes of her own and Hitoshi couldn’t even say that she was using her quirk to show off because she’d taped over her pinkies so she would have enough energy to teleport all of this to her parents house.

“Thanks for helping me move guys. I know it’s a lot of work for right after school, but the contract my parent’s company is working on this week is for a remodel of an office building, and they want them to work weekends so that the construction is less distracting. Now was pretty much the only time they were available to stay at home and since I kinda need them to act as anchors….”

“Don’t worry about it, Ocha.” Hitoshi crossed his arms. “I’m sure Powerloader and Nedzu are more than happy to have a break from these two gremlins.”

“Hey!” Izuku pouted. “Nedzu thinks we’re fun.”

Hitoshi raised an eyebrow, “And Powerloader?”

“Meh, somebody’s gotta give him grey hairs, it might as well be us.” Mei shrugged. “Ok, Gravity Girl! Are you ready?”

Ochako took a deep breath and activated One for All. The lights in the room seemed to dim as a swirling pink and green aurora formed around her. Hitoshi didn’t want to look away. There was so much power at her fingertips and it didn’t even phase her. She was so strong. He caught movement out of the corner of his eye and turned to see Izuku smiling at him knowingly. Hitoshi blushed and picked his jaw up off the ground. Why was he so embarrassed? Anyone would admire Ochako, she was amazing.

“Ok Izu-kun!” Mei grinned. “It’s your time to shine!”

Izuku jumped and stumbled as he hurried to grab his laptop, “Ok, so...yep. Everything’s up and running so I can track your warps and try to figure out exactly what makes you unique. Ok, so we’re weighing the boxes, right? That way we can see how the amount of weight you take with you affects your quirk while testing your limits at the same time. Let’s start with some of the small boxes first, since we already know you don't have any issues with teleporting with small objects and it’ll give us a good baseline for the rest of the project! If you can work up to something heavier, we might even try having you teleport us!”

Ochako nodded and Shinso picked up one of the boxes and put it on a hanging scale that he was pretty sure was originally meant for fish, but whatever, they’d sanitized it.

“This one is about a kilogram.” Hitoshi announced, tossing the box to Ochako. “You realize it’s gonna take forever to weigh every box, right?”

Izuku didn’t even look up from his laptop, “Good science takes time, Hitoshi. We can get a lot better data points if we actually know how much extra weight she’s teleporting.”

“And we’re not weighing *all* the boxes.” Mei added. “Just most of

them!”

HItoshi shrugged and sat down on the armrest of the couch, which was currently the only part of it that wasn't’ covered in boxes, “Whatever, it’s not like you have that much stuff anyway.”

Ochako stuck her tongue out at him and disappeared, making Hitoshi smile. Izuku’s computer pinged as it collected the data from her jump and he typed frantically, doing...something that Hitoshi had no idea how to make heads or tails of. It was a minute or two before Ochako came back, so she’d probably gotten distracted saying hi to her parents. They must be pretty nice people if they were cool with the whole suddenly being given an extra quirk thing. Hitoshi’s own parents hadn’t even been cool with his first quirk, so he didn’t want to know how they’d react if he suddenly showed up with a second one that made his brainwashing even more powerful. He shuddered at the thought, but thankfully by that point, Ochako had reappeared.

Izuku looked pleased as he finished his typing binge, “Ok! Onto the next box!”

Mineta ground his teeth as he looked down at the street for the upteenth time. An hour. He knew that stupid support student wasn’t at the school anymore so where the fuck was he? Mineta couldn’t have missed him, could he? No, he’d gotten enough of a headstart that there was no way, unless the kid had taken a different way home...or if he hadn’t gone home at all. Since Midoriya and Hatsume were friends, there was a good chance he had gone over to her house after school instead of his own, in which case Mineta could simply nab both of them at the same time and kill two birds with one stone.

The charge in plans was infuriating, but ultimately, it was doable and this way might even be better in the end. The most annoying part was that his targets didn't live anywhere near each other and he wasn’t really in the mood to waste another half an hour commuting on top of the hour he’d already wasted waiting for Midoriya to never show up.

He huffed in defeat and pulled out his phone, “Kurogiri, change in plans. I need a ride.”

“Ok!” Mei picked out a box and handed it to Ochako. “Everybody make your guesses and place your bets!”

Ochako helfted the box and hummed thoughtfully, “I think...around 8

kilograms."

Mei nodded and wrote down her guess, "And how much are you willing to bet on that?"

"Ten pocky sticks." Ochako smiled and shoved the box into Hitoshi's arms. "Your turn! What's your guess?"

"Uh…" Hitoshi struggled to get a better grip and strugged. "It feels pretty heavy, so maybe 13 kilograms or something? Oh, and I'll bet 3 pocky sticks."

"Not very confident, I see, Extra-Credit-Kun." Mei teased. "Ok, now for the moment of truth. To the scale!"

Izuku grinned as Hitoshi handed over his pocky. They'd started playing this game about fifteen minutes ago and Hitoshi had yet to win a single round. It was getting to the point where Izuku was starting to wonder if it was a passive effect of Uraraka's quirk, but she hadn't actually taken the gravity away from any of the boxes. If it *was* her quirk, had she always had this latent potential or was it one of the things that had changed when she'd gotten One for All?

There was a ping from his laptop and Izuku looked away from the game to check. It was just the program that he used to track Ochako's warps and with as much as she'd been going back and forth, it had obviously been going off all afternoon, so he almost dismissed it before he froze and blinked at the screen.

"Hey Ochako?" Izuku kept his eyes on the readings to make sure they didn't suddenly disappear. "You didn't go anywhere while I wasn't looking, right?"

Ochako came up and looked over his shoulder, "No? I was just about to leave, but I've been here for a solid five minutes now."

"I thought so." Izuku grinned and popped his knuckles. "Which means that the reading I just took was from someone else. This is gonna be fun."

They weren't coming.

Mineta scowled and threw one of his balls against the wall in frustration. It stuck, obviously, which was somehow much less satisfying than it would have been if it had actually bounced. Mineta

growled and stalked away. All that planning and set up for absolutely nothing! Had it just been an unlucky coincidence or had those two nuances actually figured out that someone was after them. Knowing Cheat Code's intelligence, it was probably the latter, which meant it was a waste of time trying to go after them directly. They were too unpredictable.

One of them was definitely Cheat Code though, Mineta was sure of it. He swung his backpack off his shoulders and dug around until he found the page he'd stolen from Hatsume's notebook. He uncrumpled it as he walked, glaring at the various prototype logos like it was their *fault* he'd failed. He was moving to crumple it back up again when something caught his eye and he froze as a new idea occurred to him. He slowly unwrinkled the page again. Most of the logos were simple sketches in pen or pencil, but they were all basically done in black, white, and grey. Only one was in color, which made it stand out. If she'd taken the time to find markers just for this sketch, then the colors probably had a meaning beyond just looking pretty.

Green. Pink. Purple.

Green was obviously for Midoirya, it was even in his name, not to mention his hair. And if they were going off of hair colors, then Pink was obviously for Hatsume. They were the two strongest possibilities for Cheat Code's identity, but then there had to be a third, someone close to both Hatsume and Midoriya who acted suspiciously when Cheat Code was mentioned and who had purple…Mineta smirked.

Half formed plans whirled around in his brain and by the time his phone rang, he was almost in a good mood again. At least he was happy enough not to cuss out Kurogiri on the spot.

"Hello." Kurogiri greeted. "I take it you were unsuccessful?"

"Obviously." Mineta scoffed. "It's alright though, I've got another plan to lure them out. You've been trying to decide on a target for the summer camp attack, right? I think I might have a suggestion."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: September 13, 2021 (MDT)

Topsy-Turvey

Chapter Summary

This is just cute.

Chapter Notes

Art!
claire ;P
Glitch

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Ok, Shindig. Are you sure you actually want to do this?” Ochako asked nervously. “I’ve never teleported a *person* before and if something goes wrong…”

“I mean, you teleported the houseplants without damaging them at all.” Hitoshi pointed out. “And some of the boxes were just as heavy as I am so it’ll be fine!”

“But my quirk…” Ochako hugged herself insecurly, “Aren’t you scared I’ll hurt you?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “If you do, Mei can always just put me back together again with spare parts.”

Ochako looked at him in shock and disbelief for a second before punching him in the arm, “Hitoshi Shinso, this is serious! I could actually hurt you!”

“I know, I know! HItoshi laughed and held his hands up in surrender, “But Mei and Izuku ran the numbers and you’ve trained a lot, so teleporting me shouldn’t be too different from teleporting, lik, a fridge or something.”

“Your warping ability doesn’t seem to care if something is alive, or even what it is.” Izuku shrugged. “Your quirk only cares about how much something weighs.”

Ochako still looked nervous, so as the light from One for All gathered

around her again, Hitoshi smiled, “Hey, look, I’ve got a scary quirk, but you trust me anyway, right?’

Ochako scoffed, “Don’t be ridiculous, of course I do.”

“Good.” Hitoshi held out his hand in a fist with the pinkie up, “then promise to trust me and I’ll promise to trust you, deal?”

Ochako took a deep breath and gripped his pinkie with her own, “deal.”

Hitoshi only had a split second to enjoy the moment before the world turned upside down.

Tomura hated this. He kind of wished that he’d never run into Todoroki in that stupid alley, because then he never would have blown up as a streamer and then he never would have realized that he liked gaming more than he’d ever liked being a villain. If Sensei had actually cared about him, he would have seen that, right? Even if he hadn’t, what kind of sick person encouraged a five year old to kill people? The chat didn’t even know that that was the *legacy* his Sensei was trying to pass onto him and still people were donating like crazy to try and get him out of the house. He didn’t even live with Sensei, but Tomura still had to admit that getting an apartment with zero ties to him or the league was starting to sound extremely appealing. At the very least, he’d be able to get a better gaming set up than he was able to have with a laptop in the *murder alley* , as Todoroki liked to call it.

He shouldn’t be doing this. He had no idea how Sensei would react if he knew that Tomura was playing around with the idea of leaving the league and abandoning his role as Sensei’s protege, but for some crazy reason he was still going behind everyone’s back and researching apartments. Without Sensei’s money, he wouldn’t be able to afford anything *too* fancy, but there were a couple hole-in-the-wall places that had caught his eye. He should probably get something with two bedrooms, in case Todoroki wanted to get off the streets for a couple nights…

Tomura caught himself before that line of thought could go any farther. With as much time as they spent together, he sometimes forgot that they were fundamentally enemies. Todoroki was a hero student. There was absolutely no way that he would ever be willing to move in with a villain, even if they practically acted like squabbling brothers on their streams. It just wouldn’t work out.

Still, if the apartment didn't have any other connection to the league, then it might still be neutral enough for Todoroki to be open to using it as a streaming space. And as long as he kept it a secret from Sensei for as long as possible, he might just be able to get away with it. Hopefully. Why did everything have to be so complicated, he just wanted to relax and live the rest of his life as a stupid streamer and not have to worry about what Sensei would do to him, or worse to Todoroki, if he were to find out. Was that too much to ask?

Tomura sighed and clicked on another listing. Probably.

Hitoshi knew that *theoretically,* they must be on solid ground. *Theoretically.* His stomach, however, hadn't gotten the message. He could vaguely see other people around him, but all he could focus on was clamping his hands over his mouth and trying not to throw up.

"Sweetie?" A feminine voice said. "Is he supposed to be that green?"

"Oh no!" Ochako sounded panicked. "Dad, grab a bowl!"

Somebody shoved a bowl at his chest and Hitoshi grabbed it gratefully, fully losing his battle and his guts. It took a moment for his stomach to settle down and even then he was left with a gross, acrid taste in his mouth, "Is this what it feels like every time? Damn, Ochako, you must have an iron stomach or something, this is terrible! Ugh!"

Ochako patted his back as she chuckled awkwardly, "Yeah, it takes some getting used to. Um, Mom, Dad, this is Shindig...uh...Hitoshi Shinso, one of my friends."

Hitoshi grimaced and looked up as he realized that, yes, Ochako's parents were here too and yes, they had just seen him throw up. Wonderful. Great first impression. He gave an awkward wave, "Um...hi?"

Ochako's parents looked like her. Her mom had the same pink cheeks and brown hair, but she obviously got her muscles and strength from her dad. Thankfully, they also seemed to have her personality, because instead of looking at him with disgust, her dad just looked concerned, "You ok, son?"

Hitoshi swallowed, "Uh, yeah, just kinda wasn't expecting that."

"Yeah, neither were we!" Ochako's mom laughed. "We thought the

nausea was from her *using* her quirk! But I guess it's just the gravity going all topsy-turvy on you, huh?"

Ochako had taken the bowl away from him at some point and brought him a glass of water, "So, uh, besides the nausea, are you feeling alright? There weren't any other effects, right?"

Hitoshi shook his head, "No, I'm already starting to feel more...well, less like I just got off of a really bad roller coaster. I'll be ok in a couple minutes, but I am *not* looking forward to the return trip. No offense."

Ochako wrinkled her nose, "Yeah...I think I might have to incorporate barf bags into my hero costume if I plan to take civilians with me. People I teleport frequently will probably get used to the gravity shifts, but new people...maybe there's some other way to lessen the impact?"

"If anyone can figure that out, it's Mei." Hitoshi shrugged. "But yeah, we should talk to Izuku and make sure there's nothing else going on before you start taking rescue victims on an unexpected tilt-a-hurl."

Ochako's mom frowned, "Isn't it tilt-a- *whirl?"*

Hitoshi smirked, "I said what I said."

Ochako pouted and her dad clapped him firmly on the back, "Well, now that *that's* taken care of, it's nice to meet you. We've heard a lot about you!"

Hitoshi frowned in confusion, "You have?"

"Of course!" Her mom smiled. "Ochako talks about you all the time!"

"Um, we should probably be heading back soon!" Ochako blushed furiously. "Um, Shindig, you're good to jump again, right?"

"Oh, don't worry, we'll try not to embarrass you." Ochako's dad winked. "Much."

Ochako groaned and put her head in her hands, "I'm just gonna…"

She disappeared from existence and Hitoshi blinked, "Uh...bye?"

Her mom was struggling to hold back her giggles, "Does that happen often?"

Hitoshi shrugged and stared at where Ochako was *supposed* to be until she reappeared, blushing even harder than she had been before, “Sorry, I kinda didn’t mean to do that, but um...Mina says hi?”

Izuku ran through the numbers again. The mystery warper had warped one more time after that initial ping, but no more data had come through after that, so the other teleporter must be staying in one place. The basic mechanics of the warp seemed *similar* to Ochako’s, but the new guy’s signature was more spread out, which made them a lot more difficult to track. Izuku could tell that there had been a warp and kinda get a general sense for where the guy had ended up, but it was going to take a lot more work to actually be able to *track* them like he could with Ochako.

Izuku’s main question was *why*. Ochako’s jumps had been pretty specific, even in the beginning when they were just starting to figure out how her new quirk worked. Why was this other signature so difficult? It wasn’t until she had taken Hitoshi along on one of her jumps that it clicked. When Ochako warped with large objects, such as people, her quirk affected a larger area and it looked a little more similar to the dispersed signature from the mystery warper, but when it was just her, the area of effect was much smaller. So the other warper was either extremely large, which wasn’t very likely, especially considering that the mystery warper’s signature *had* differed slightly between the two warps, which implied that something *had* changed, or their quirk was primarily optimized to warp other people with them. It was possible that there was some other explanation for the diffused signature, but from Izuku’s observations that one was the most likely. He would have to check the quirk registry to make sure, but to his knowledge, there was only one teleportation quirk that would fit the readings he’d gotten from the mystery warper and that was Warp Gate.

He’d gotten a signature from Kurogiri.

Chapter End Notes

> Yes, I've been in a mood for pinkie promises lately, ok? What of it?
>
> Next Update: September 20, 2021 (MDT)

Finals

Chapter Summary

The hero course final exams.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi was ready to punch something, but he was pretty sure that was a normal reaction to three solid days of brutal academic testing that was probably the main reason why the physical exams were on the very last day to let them let off some steam before heading off to summer break. The fact that they were punching the teachers though was an interesting twist. He almost felt bad for Ochako having to fight All Might, but it only made sense for the two One for All holders to be paired up, since that was the only way the students would even stand a chance, but it would be interesting to see how Mina would hold up during the fight.

He glanced over toward Kaminari, who had seemed almost *relieved* when it was announced that they'd been paired up together, which was weird. Because it had also been announced that they were fighting *Nedzu* and Kaminari was always going on about how intelligence wasn't his strong suit. The only reason Hitoshi could think of for his reaction was that he had someone in the class that he was trying to avoid or *really* didn't want to get paired with for whatever reason. But that also didn't make any sense because Kaminari was the definition of a social butterfly. There wasn't anybody he didn't like! Maybe he could brainwash him and get the tea, but that was a boundary he really shouldn't cross anyway. He could always just *ask* him and see if he'd answer voluntarily, but that was awkward and Hitoshi would rather die of curiosity than awkwardness, thanks.

"I honestly thought they'd pit you against Aizawa." Kaminari laughed awkwardly, shooting a nervous glance up toward the front of the bus where Nedzu was sitting. "You've got, like, those similar scarf things and eyebags and stuff."

"They probably just want to avoid any nepotism charges." Hitoshi

grumbled.

Kaminari's eyes widened, "What?!"

"Don't worry about it." Hitoshi said quickly. "Now do you have any strategies in mind for how to fight a rat smarter than most humans?"

Kaminari went pale, "Um...mostly just don't die?"

Hitoshi rolled his eyes, "Nice start, but I think we're gonna need something with a little bit more oomph."

"Well, mon ami, I hope you're as fast as you look." Aoyama said, his smile somehow sparkling as he spoke. "I would imagine it takes quite a bit of speed to outrun a black hole."

"I'm not going to outrun Thirteen's quirk." Tenya said tensely. "That would require going faster than the speed of light. I will only be outrunning their reaction time."

"Light will be absorbed as well?!" Aoyama looked nauseous. "Oh my…"

"You didn't…" Tenya scowled. "How were you planning on fighting them?!"

"My navel laser is simply too marvelous!" Aoyama said. "It doesn't usually require any planning!"

"Everything requires planning!" Tenya said incredulously. "You can't just *wing it!* "

They both tensed as an automated recording of Nedzu's voice played out over the testing area, "All combatants are in position for the final exam. Begin!"

Tenya fell into fighting stance and stared straight ahead, "When Thirteen comes, we need to be ready to…"

His eyes widened as he felt himself be pulled *backwards.* He looked over toward Aoyama in a panic and saw that he had already grabbed onto the nearest railing to prevent himself from being sucked in by Thirteen's quirk. Tenya quickly dug his heels in and followed suit, yelling at Thirteen over his shoulder, "Coming at us from behind?! That is disgraceful! You're a hero!"

“Villains aren’t going to fight fair kids.” Thirteen sounded almost amused. “So what are you going to do about it?”

“We need to come up with a plan of attack.” Shouto began. “Aizawa has practically maxed out his stealth stats, so he’ll most likely open with a sneak attack.”

Yaoyorozu blinked in confusion for a moment before nodding, “So what’s the plan?”

“Not sure.” Shouto frowned. “My first instinct is to run, but it'll be a lot easier to win if the whole party is on the same page, so how about you tell me what *you* think we should do and then we can go from there, sound like a plan?”

“Um...sure?” Yaoyorozu looked surprised. “I actually *did* come up with a strategy that *might* work, if you think we could maybe…”

“Let’s hear it.” Shouto nodded decisively. “We’ve got a boss to beat.”

“So, like, you can teleport us to All Might and we can attack him before he has a chance to fight back, right?” Mina asked. “Or does your quirk not really work like that?”

“I mean, it *does,* technically.” Ochako said. “But I’d really rather leave that as a last resort.”

“Why?” Mina pouted. “Wouldn’t it give us an advantage? I want to teleport!”

Ochako growned, “My quirk isn’t like Kurogiri’s, Mina! I’m used to the G-forces it takes to teleport and everything, but anyone that tags along isn’t and there isn’t anything my quirk can do to protect you from them. When Hitoshi and I tried it the other day, just one jump wiped him out for a full five minutes and then it was a couple hours before he was up to 100% again. So, yeah, no. It’s not really the best option if you want to, you know, *fight.* ”

“Oh…” Mina slowly got a mischievous look on her face as an idea occurred to her. “We could...I mean, we probably *shouldn’t,* but we *could…”*

“What?” Ochako demanded. “Come on Mina! Spit it out!”

“Well I was just thinking, if whoever you teleport is gonna be

practically useless," Mina defended, "then what if you don't teleport *me?* "

"Oh." Ochako's eyes widened and she couldn't hold back a smile. "*Oh…* this is gonna be interesting."

"Ok, this is pointless." Hitoshi huffed. "Nedzu's turned this place into a maze and is only making it worse by knocking down walls left and right. If we keep going like we have been, we're never gonna find a way out before time's up."

"Well then what are we supposed to do? Head straight for Nedzu?" Kaminari asked. "We don't even know where he *is!"*

"Hmm…" Hitoshi thought for a minute. "Well, right now, we're at a disadvantage. He can see us but we can't see him…." Hitoshi grabbed his capture scarf and used it to yank down the nearest camera. "Let's change that."

"Got it!" Kaminari grinned and started sparking as he grabbed the wires where the camera had been, "One blackout, coming right up!"

Tenya grit his teeth, "We're not getting anywhere."

"I can try…this!" Aoyama shot his navel laser at Thirteen and, predictably, it disappeared into their quirk in under a second. "Well, that did not work."

"I told you it wouldn't." Tenya growled. "Black holes are strong enough to absorb light!"

They couldn't run, they couldn't fight, they couldn't even let go of these stupid railings! What was he supposed to do when nothing worked right and all the rules he thought were supposed to apply here were thrown out the window?!

Get creative.

Tenya gasped softly as it clicked. This was what Tensei and Artiste had been trying so hard to hammer through his head. When everything went wrong, he had to go with the flow and think outside the box, otherwise he'd be paralyzed! Direct attacks on Thirteen were useless, they'd simply turn everything to dust, but if they didn't limit themself to the rigid rules of a riar one-one-one fight…

“Aoyama, quickly!” Tenya yelled. “Aim for the ceiling! Let’s bring the roof down on top of them!”

Aoyama’s eyes brightened with excitement, “Oui, Monsieur!”

Tenya watched Thirteen with rapt attention as Aoyama adjusted his aim and fired. He just needed to wait until just the right moment…

“That’s not going to work, kids!” Thirteen called out, using their other hand to suck up the debris from the roof and keeping one hand pointed toward the kids. “You’re going to have to do a lot better that that!”

Tenya almost smiled as he let go of the railing. He knew they’d take care of the debris, but they also made the mistake of looking up. As soon as Thirteen saw him flying toward them, they deactivated their quirk, but with all their focus on the falling roof, there wasn’t any time to stop him and Tenya used the full momentum of Back Hole to help him as he prepared a devestating kick that knocked Thirteen halfway across the room. Tenya crouched to lower his center of gravity, but he didn’t stop moving. Instead, he let his rollerblades do all the work and used the speed he already had to curve around and grab Aoyama, flinging him onto his back as they rocketed toward the exit.

It didn’t take long for Aoyama to recover from the surprise, “Ah, so we’re making a run for it after all?”

“I guess so.” Tenya panted.

Aoyama started squirming, “Let me face backward and I shall use my sparkle to dazzle all those who would try to follow!”

Tenya nodded and focused on staying steady as Aoyama held on tight and maneuvered himself so that they were back to back with their elbows linked. It was like they’d become their own battleship and Aoyama was the artillery as he shot his laser in short bursts behind them. There were crashes as anything that was hit with the laser fell to the floor and created obstacles for Thirteen, but the unexpected result was that every time Aoyama shot his laser, it gave Tenya a boost of speed as if the two of them were a literal rocket. The rollerblades get rid of any friction, so all the energy of Aoyama’s laser was converted almost directly into pure speed and the two of them practically flew down the halls and through the exit gate. It took a full thirty seconds for so for them to actually slow down enough to stop and they were still speeding away when they heard the recording,

“Tenya Iida and Yugi Aoyama have passed the final exam!”

“Ok, so I’m gonna take the high ground and try to figure out where Nedzu is while you sneak up on him through the tunnels, right?”

“Hitoshi nodded, “They didn’t give us comms, but uh…dang it, what can we use to communicate?”

“Well, uh..I have this?” Denki pulled a laser pointer out of his pocket.

Hitoshi blinked, “Do I even want to know?”

Denki shrugged sheepishly, “It was on Present Mic’s desk one time and I thought it was cool, so I was playing with it, but then he came back in the room and I didn’t want to get in trouble, so I shoved it in my pocket and I meant to return it after class, but then I forgot that I had it and now it’s been too long to return it.”

Hitoshi just stared at him. Mic never really used laser pointers while he was teaching, so he’d probably bought it for the cats and then assumed he lost it.

Apparently, Kaminari took his silence as a sign to keep rambling, “I was thinking that even if Nedzu stopped knocking down buildings when I took the power out, there’s still a lot of smoke and stuff in the air, so if I shine the laser where I see him, you’ll be able to see where it’s pointing. I’m sorry, that’s probably really stupid.”

“No.” Hitoshi grinned. “It’s just crazy enough that it might actually work.”

Ochako huddled on a nearby rooftop and watched as Mina taunted All Might just like they’d agreed. She might be going up against the number one hero, but she looked like she was having the time of her life.

“Hey All Might!” Mina laughed and waved as she skated around on her acid. “Are you ready to go down?”

All Might gave a booming laugh, “Oh, young Ashido, did you come to fight me alone? Where’s young Uraraka?”

“Oh, you know, here and there.” Mina skated around him. “She tends to just pop up when we need her. Like now!”

Ochako took a deep breath and called on One for All, focusing on All Might as her anchor point. She just needed to focus on where he was and appear....right behind him! She smiled as the world spun and she landed less than a foot behind All Might. Bingo.

She grabbed onto his cape and he immediately whirled around, but she hung tight even as she was whipped through the air. It took some concentration to focus on Mina's gravity, but just as All Might jumped to try and body slam her, she latched on and *disappeared.*

When they reappeared, All Might immediately collapsed in a puff of steam and Ochako panicked when she realized that Mina was already running toward them and she didn't know about All Might's small form! Ochako cursed under her breath. Of course All Might's body wouldn't be able to handle the jump without reverting. Why hadn't she thought of that?! But if she could teleport *close* to All Might, then she could jump *far* from Mina, at least now that she wasn't focusing all her attention on hanging onto All Might's cape for dear life.

In the blink of an eye, the two of them were two streets away and Ochako snapped the cuff around All Might's wrist as soon as she could so that the exam would officially end and the med bots could enter the city. She didn't even pay attention to the recording that announced their victory as she hurried to help All Might. He was already kneeling on the ground, so she just rubbed his back as he threw up, "I'm so sorry! Are you ok?"

"Umm….I'll get back to you on that." All Might wheezed. "But I'm proud. I...I did not expect you to beat me so easily."

Ochako chuckled awkwardly, "Uh, it was actually Mina's idea. Well, and I guess Shindig should get some credit too, since he was the one who discovered the, um…. *unfortunate* side effects of riding along with me. Sorry."

"It's…" All Might took a deep breath. "It's alright. Now go and...and celebrate your victory young lady. You deserve it."

Ochako hesitantly stood. She hated to leave him like this, but the med bots should be picking him up soon and she needed to intercept Mina before she saw All Might's small form. After a moment, she nodded and warped, falling into step with Mina as she skated down one of the fake streets.

"Hey!" Mina skidded to a stop. "Why'd you disappear again? I was gonna help you cuff him!"

“He wasn’t completely debilitated after one warp and I wanted to be completely sure.” Ochako lied. “He’s the number one hero! He’s going to be strong!”

“I guess.” Mina pouted. “But we won! We passed! Summer camp here we come!”

Ochako grinned, “Yep! What are you most excited for?”

“Hmm, probably swimming.” Mina said. “What about you? Are you excited to see a certain purple haired boy in a swim suit?”

“W-what?!” Ochako blushed and covered her face with her hands. “Mina! Why would you say something like that?!”

“I knew it!” Mina grabbed her hands away triumphantly. “I *knew* that’s why you got so flustered when he met your parents. You’re crusing on him hardcore, aren’t you?!”

“N-no!” Ochako stuttered. “Keep your voice down.”

“Ah, come on, he’s at his own exam, he’s not gonna hear.” Mina rolled her eyes. “Forget swimming, there’s a more important goal this summer: get this ship to sail!”

“Mina!” Ochako whined as Mina started giggling. “Mina, no!”

Hitoshi followed the red line of light through the smoke until he finally found where Nedzu was hiding. He grinned and adjusted his support item so that he could mimic Kaminari’s voice, “Whoa! Shinso! I found him! Think we can win?”

“Ah! Young Shinso! Brilliant use of teamwork and your support items!” Nedzu smiled and looked around the room. “But in case you’ve forgotten, I did read your file before you started hiding your activation requirements, so I’m afraid I won’t be answering any questions from you or Kaminari today!”

Hitoshi sighed and stepped out of the shadows, “I guess we have to do this the hard way then.”

Nedzu smiled, “I suppose so!”

Hitoshi lowered into a fighting stance and glanced out the window. The laser pointer was still shining, but the trajectory kept changing like Kaminari was moving toward them. Good, that meant that even if

he couldn't beat Nedzu on his own, then he could stall until his partner arrived. He tore his eyes away from the window and focused all his attention on Nedzu, who was standing there smiling at him like he didn't have a care in the world. Hitoshi felt a shiver run down his spine. He didn't know a whole lot about Nedzu and his fighting style, but if his brain was anything like Izuku's, he was in for a rough fight.

Hitoshi's first move was to attack with his capture weapon, but Nedzu dodged underneath it and rushed towards him before his attack even reached its target. Nedzu lept toward him and Hitoshi managed to force him back with a kick at the very last second, but by the time he regained his balance, Nedzu was already launching another attack. It seemed like everytime he blocked or dodged one attack, there was another just waiting. It was like a game of cat and mouse, but this time, the cat was literally a mouse.

Hitoshi tried once or twice to switch to the offensive, but Nedzu forced him back onto defense every single time. Finally, though, Hitoshi felt a tingle of electricity in the air. Nedzu noticed it too and turned toward the doorway, giving Hitoshi the opening he needed to finally, *finally* , wrap his capture weapon around Nedzu's waist. He yanked the entire contraption off his neck and threw it toward the doorway right as Kaminari appeared, "Kaminari! Do your thing!"

"What?!"" Kaminari fumbled the capture scarf for a moment before finally grabbing it in a bear hug, "Oh, right! This thing has a bunch of metal in it!"

Nedzu was almost completely untangled by the time Kaminari was able to send an electric shock down the length of the scarf, but not quite. He went rigid as the scarf got turned into a taser and moments later, Hitoshi was running forward to slam cuffs around his wrist.

"Kaminari Denki and Hitoshi Shinso have passed the final exam!"

"Shouto Todoroki and Momo Yaoyorozu have passed the final exam!"

Shouta was honestly impressed. He'd expected Todoroki to steamroll Yaoyorozu and not listen to her input, but apparently he'd been working on his teamwork skills when no one was looking. The plan they'd put together used both their quirks well and played to their strengths, which showed a lot of potential. There was still room for improvement, obviously, but they were still teenagers.

"We did it, Todoroki!" Yaoyorozu smiled. "We beat Aizawa!"

Todorki nodded, “Poggers.”

Denki glanced over at Shinso as they picked their way out of the maze of destruction that Nedzu had created for them. At first, he’d just been grateful that he hadn’t gotten paired with Todoroki because he *really* didn’t think that he’d be able to keep his cool for the whole exercise and not let on that he knew about his classmate’s super secret streaming hobby...or, more accurately, the murderous gaming partner that came with it.

He was still kinda panicking over who he was supposed to tell. Like, what if Todoroki actually *was* working with the villains and then the teachers found out and then somehow realized that Denki had known the whole time and thought he was helping them?! But what if Todoroki *wasn’t* giving out any information and the teachers figured out that he was homeless and made him go back to his dad, who was obviously not the *greatest* if Todoroki would rather live on the streets than apologize to him. If that happened, Denki would feel terrible for ruining Todoroki’s life, because he at least seemed to be fairly happy doing what he was doing. Which was streaming video games with a villain who had tried to kill them. Perfectly normal.

Sometimes Denki just wished that Aizawa or somebody would find the stream on their own so that *they* could figure out what to do about it and Denki wouldn’t have to worry about it anymore. It was kinda a stupid thing to hope for, because teachers were normally pretty lame, so what teacher was going to listen to stupid gaming streams in their free time? He’d pretty much written the whole thing off as a vain hope by the time he’d gotten paired up with Shinso and was pretty much ready to ignore it like he had been ever since he’d first figured it out.

And then Shinso had made that nepotism comment.

Denki wasn’t 100% sure what nepotism was, but he was pretty certain it was similar to favoritism and meant that Shinso and Aizawa were related somehow. Even if they weren’t, there was bound to be some kind of connection between the two and that meant that if *Shinso* somehow found the stream, then it was only a matter of time until Aizawa figured it out. That meant that all Denki really had to do was point Shinso in the right direction and he could wash his hands of the entire situation!

“So...uh….do you have any hobbies?” Denki started. “Like video games you play or anything?”

Shinso shrugged, “I wouldn’t describe myself as a hardcore gamer or anything, but I play. You?”

“Yeah!” Denki latched onto the opening like a lifeline. “I like, um, listening to gaming streams and stuff when I study. I actually know one that you’d probably really like, um if you want.”

“I dunno.” Shinso hummed noncommittally. “I don’t have a lot of spare time right now.”

“One of the streamers has, like, this really deadpan sense of humor, kinda like you.” Denki pushed. “They’re just this streaming duo, you know, and they’re pretty new on the scene, but they go by Dusty and Icy Cat if you want to look them up. I can send you a link too, just...I really think you should check them out.”

Shinso looked at him suspiciously, “Ok…?”

Denki exhaled in relief and hurried ahead to where the med bots were waiting. He was so glad that was over, that had been awkward as hell.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: September 27, 2021 (MDT)

Discovery

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of finals.

Chapter Notes

Art!
mothman mothdad
_Q_
Haruuuu

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Stop pouting, Izuku-kun! Failure is an essential part of invention!” Mei glanced up from her sketchbook. “Plus, I know it’s not where you wanted it to be, but it’s not like your tracking program doesn’t *work.”*

“I know, but it’s not exact enough to be useful.” Izuku whined. “I can find the major *city* that Kurogiri is in and I’ve got a few ideas on how to narrow it down, but I really wanted to finish it by the end of the semester.”

“I don’t even know why you’re complaining!” Kohaku rolled her eyes. “The assignment was to do one semester long project and you and your girlfriend both did *two!* And that was on top of however many side projects you both had going on!”

Izuku shot her a withering look, “For the last time, we're not dating. And Mei actually *finished* hers. The Iida brothers both passed their finals thanks to their new modifications! It’s so cool and yet, here I am and I can’t even do my job well enough for the heroes to find one single villain. I’m a failure.”

He slammed his head on Mei’s desk and she absentmindedly patted his hair with one hand while she drew blueprints with her other, “There there. Izuku-kun. Life is so hard.”

Izuku lifted his head to glare at her, but she just shot him a cheeky smile, so he groaned and lowered his head again. “Just let me wallow in self pity.”

“As much as I’d enjoy the break, that’s probably counter productive.” Powerloader said in amusement. “And this is a lesson for all of you. Deadlines are helpful, but they aren’t the end all be all of invention. They give you something to work towards, sure, but if you put too much stock in a deadline, and then don't reach it, you’ll end up feeling exactly what Midoriya is feeling right now: demotivation. It can be not only harmful, but paralyzing in the long run. So just remember that deadlines are only truly important when they help you, but there’s usually always time to tweak things afterwards so don’t let them stop you. Got it?”

There was a chorus of understanding noises from the class, but when Izuku didn’t respond, Powerloader sighed, “Got it, Midoriya?”

Izuku groaned and sat up. “Got it.”

“Good. Powerloader nodded. “The good news, both for those of you who still need to finish their projects and for those who will be starting new ones, is that we are having a design bootcamp for all of you during summer break.”

“Ooh! You mean, kinda like the training camp that Extra-Credit-Kun's class is going on?!” Mei asked.

“Almost exactly like that.” Powerloader confirmed. “With a couple major differences. First, even though they’re happening the same week, we’re going to be staying put, not going off campus like the hero students are. Since you’re going to be focusing on your creative and technological skills rather than your combat skills like they are, it will be more beneficial if you’re already familiar with the labs, rather than in an unknown location. That being said, we will be bringing in a variety of new materials for you to experiment with, as well as special guests who will be staying the week with us and helping you improve your skills while hopefully answering any questions you kids have about the support industry. It will be an amazing opportunity and can open a lot of doors for you, so we want everyone to be on their best behavior. That means no unnecessary explosions, alright?”

“Of course not.” Mei agreed easily. “All explosions are necessary.”

Powerloader heaved a long sigh, “You know what? I’m just grateful the Shields have already met you two so at least they won’t be surprised. Please don’t take that as a challenge.”

Izuku smiled slowly as Mei cackled. He’d never been to summer camp before, but he had a feeling that surpassing challenges was kinda the

point. This was going to be fun.

The minute the bell rang, Ochako grabbed her bag and started activating One for All so she could teleport to All Might and maybe apologize again for going so hard on him during the final exam, but Mina saw and grabbed her before she could disappear.

“Oh no, you stay right where you are, young lady.” Mina grinned and tugged on Ochako’s arm. “We are all going to the mall this weekend and *you* are going to make sure your precious *Shindig* comes along for the ride.”

“Mina!” Ochako blushed. “Shindig is an introvert! He doesn’t like going to malls and stuff.”

Mina turned sharply, “Oh? And what happens when an introvert goes someplace social? They latch onto the nearest safe friend and stay with them the whole time! We just need to make sure he latches onto *you.* Let’s go!”

“I…” Ochako sighed and let herself be dragged along as Mina tried to catch up to Hitoshi. “We *do* hang out, you know. Frequently. You can’t just drag him along to the mall so he spends time with me. ”

“Oh hush, I’m sure he needs to buy some stuff for the summer camp too, so it’s not *just* to get him to hang out with you.” Mina dismissed. “But if you *happen* to confess your feelings over boba at the end…”

She winked and Ochako groaned as they finally caught up with Hitoshi, who took one look between the two of them and raised an eyebrow, “Do I even want to know?”

Ochako opened her mouth to say something, but Mina beat her to the punch, “Hey Shinso, the whole class is coming to the mall this weekend to pick up whatever we need for the summer camp. You’re coming right?”

“Uh…” Hitoshi glanced between Ochako and Mina for a long moment. “Are you going Ocha?”

“Mmhmm!” Ochako squeaked. “I need, uh, bug spray! Gotta keep those pests away! You know!”

It was taking all of her willpower to stay put, but normally when she got flustered she ended up jumping to Mina, who was right beside her,

so her usual escape strategy was just going to put her right back where she didn't want to be.

Hitoshi frowned, but shrugged, "Sure, why not? My adults are gonna be busy preparing everything, probably, so it's not like I won't have time. I also wanna get some more practice teleporting with you, if that's alright?"

Ochako nodded frantically, "Ok, um, I, uh...I guess I'll pick you up?"

Hitoshi grinned, "Yeah, it's a…um, sounds like a plan."

She could almost *feel* Mina pouting beside her but Ochako smiled, "Alright. It's a plan."

Hitoshi finished his latest episode and sighed. Right now, was the Aizawa-Yamada household equivalent of family time, which basically meant that they were all currently existing within the same space, but mostly doing their own thing. Mic was busy in the kitchen making dinner, while Hitoshi watched TV and Aizawa was taking a nap on the couch beside him. It was nice, but it meant that it was up to him to decide whether he wanted to watch another episode or actually check out those streamers that Kaminari had recommended. He usually didn't care too much about gaming streams, he preferred to play the games himself, but Kaminari had seemed oodly insistent that he watch that one and it was honestly making Hitoshi kinda curious. It wouldn't hurt to just watch a few minutes, right?

Aizawa looked up from his nap when Hitoshi turned off the TV, "What's up? Are you bored of your show already?"

Hitoshi shrugged as he pulled out his laptop, "I dunno. Kaminari recommended these streamer guys when we were doing our final the other day, so I figured I might as well give them a try."

"Kaminari?" Aizawa groaned. "You really had to take media recommendations from the loudest kid in class?"

Mic popped his head in from the kitchen, "Oh, don't complain, Shou. I *know* you secretly find us loud ones entertaining."

Aizawa scowled at him, "You are the exception."

"Sure I am, Shou." Mic winked knowingly. "Of course."

“Ignore him.” Aizawa huffed. “Whatever, go ahead. Hopefully Kaminari has at least half-decent taste. I wouldn’t think that you’d like the same things.”

“He said I’d like it specifically, well, at least the humor.” Hitoshi said. “Hm, it actually looks like they’re in the middle of a steam right now. I might as well watch that instead of one of the recordings.”

He clicked on the icon to watch the steam and waited for it to load. The stream was just the game they were playing, but instead of having a video of the steamer in the corner like Hitoshi had expected, it was just a voiceover, “I know that Dusty said to stay in that one area, but Imma be honest: I am completely lost right now. Maybe when he comes back from buying snacks, he’ll help me actually reorient myself, but for now...welp, I guess I’ll die.

Whoever was playing, Icy Cat apparently, obviously wasn’t playing to win, because he didn’t even care when his character respawned only to get immediately killed again, “Well, I guess I’m here for a good time, not a long time. These guys are probably above my level, aren’t they?”

Mic walked out of the kitchen and peered over Hitoshi's shoulder. “I think I may have watched this once or twice. I know the streamer's voice sounds familiar.”

Hitoshi frowned, “It’s familiar to me too, though, and I *know* I’ve never watched this steam before.”

“Same here.” Aizawa had sat up by this point and Hitoshi tilted the screen so both of his adults could see too. “I’ve heard that voice before...It almost sounds like Todoroki.”

“Yes! That’s it!” Hitoshi said triumphantly. “That’s exactly who it sounds like!”

“Wow…” Mic gave an impressed nod. “Pretty impressive that he’s able to do all this behind his old man’s back.”

Hitoshi frowned, “You don’t think Endeavor knows?”

Aizawa just gave him a tired look, “There is no way Endeavor would allow something like this.”

They listened quietly while that sunk in, watching Todoroki's character die for the first time in as many minutes.

“He really is bad at this.” Aizawa chuckled.

Mic slapped his shoulder, “Oh, don’t be like that. He’s trying his best.”

“I think that’s actually the point.” Hitoshi said, pointing to the chat. “I think the streaming partner usually just roasts him the entire stream because everyone’s trying to come up with the best insult to make up for *Dusty’s* absence.”

“Dusty…” Mic hummed. “Who’s that? Do you think it’s another student?”

“It must be.” Aizawa said. “He wouldn't have many opportunities to meet anyone else.”

“Maybe Bakugo?” Hitoshi suggested. “He seems rude enough to enjoy roasting Todoroki for hours on end.”

“Be quiet you two.” Mic hissed. “I think the partenre’s coming back.”

Hitoshi grinned. “Just watch, it’s gonna be Kouda or someone we’d never expect.”

Aizawa muffled a snort as Todoroki started talking to someone, “Took you long enough, I had had time to die five times while you were gone.”

“Only five?” A raspy voice responded. “I guess you’re such a hopeless noob anymore. I thought it’d be more.”

As soon as they heard the voice, Hitoshi froze and Aizawa went pale. It looked like he was only keeping himself from hyperventilating by forcibly reminding himself to breathe and Mic looked between the two of them in gorwing panic, “Wait, what’s going on? Shou, are you ok?”

“It…” Hitoshi tried to swallow, only to realize his mouth was dry. “It might not be him. Izuku and Mei didn't show me much of the footage, just a little, so maybe it’s just somebody who sounds similar.”

“I hear that voice in my nightmares at least three times a week, Hitoshi.” Aizawa snapped. “I’m pretty sure I wouldn't forget it. It’s definitely him.”

“What are you two talking about?!” Mic yelled. “Do you know who it is?!”

“I think so, it’s just…” Hitoshi glanced at Aizawa. “Why would

Todoroki be hanging out with Shigaraki?”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: October 4, 2021 (MDT)

Binge

Chapter Summary

A trip to the mall sounds good right about now.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Black Datura X
mothman mothdad
Gl!tch
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Memes!
X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi was exhausted. He hadn't slept in two days and for once, he couldn't even blame it on insomnia. No, instead he had to blame it on his classmate, who was apparently an oddly successful streamer who spent his time getting roasted by an actual, real life villain because *that* was completely normal. Obviously. What even was his life?

After finding the stream the other night, Hitoshi and his adults had spent the entire night and next day going through every single last episode that *Dusty and Icy Cat* had archived, but even though they hadn't been streaming long, the duo was ridiculously dedicated to putting out content, which meant that they didn't get to bed until way past midnight.

It was easy to see how the two of them had become so popular. Todoroki's tendency to actively *encourage* his followers to make fun of him was unique and had caught a lot of people's attention, add to that his deadpan humor and Shigaraki's constant roasting and it was no wonder so many people tuned into their streams. Despite the seriousness of the situation, Hitoshi had found himself actually enjoying the content and he'd even caught Aizawa reluctantly cracking a smile a few times.

They weren't watching the stream for entertainment, though, they were watching it because as soon as they'd all gotten over the shee panic of hearing Shigaraki's raspy voice in their living room, they'd all jumped to the next logical conclusion: that Todoroki was likely a

member of the league and that the villains had somehow planted him as a traitor within 1A to feed them information. It made sense, but at the same time, it didn't. From what Izuku and Mei had told him, Todoroki had *saved* Aizawa at the USJ, but if he was actually a villain, then wouldn't he have just let him die?

That was the main reason they'd decided to binge the stream instead of immediately notifying the police. At first Hitoshi had been convinced that Todoroki was a villain, but after more than a day of listening to Shigaraki and Todorki interact, he wasn't so sure anymore. They didn't act like co-conspirators so much as friends or maybe even brothers with a healthy dash of sibling rivalry sprinkled on top. Todoroki never talked about 1A, except to benignly make fun of Bakugo a few times and Shigaraki spoke about the league even less, so it didn't look like they were discussing insider information.

Hitoshi supposed that it was always possible that they were sharing info off stream, but as weird as it sounded, it almost seemed like they'd designated the stream as some kind of neutral space where their roles as hero and villain didn't really matter. That somehow didn't stop them from joking about Shigaraki trying to kill their entire class, though, which Aizawa thought was ridiculous and both Hitoshi and Mic had to admit was darkly hilarious.

As terrible as it looked, there was still a chance that Todoroki wasn't a traitor, and that he'd only paired up with Shigaraki and streaming because he felt he had nowhere else to turn. The fact that Endeavor had kicked him out though, while surprising to learn, only added more evidence to the villain theory, because it gave him a *reason* .

Hitoshi was so tired that he didn't even notice anyone else had come into the kitchen until a steaming mug in front of him. He blinked up slowly and looked up at Aizawa, "What do you want?"

"For my students to not be problem children." Aizawa said dryly. "But caffeine is the next best thing. Drink up."

Hitoshi took a deep gulp of the coffee and groaned, "Why is binge watching more exhausting than insomnia?"

"Because your brain was still working the whole time." Aizawa said. "It's the same reason stakeouts have you feeling dead even though, objectively, you were just sitting in the car the whole time. It's the same concept here, especially since we were actively researching a villain. The fact that it's a villain we've fought before and that it

affects one of your classmates only makes it more mentally and emotionally exhausting."

"Oh yeah. *That.* " Hitoshi drawled. "Where's your partner in crime? Isn't he usually the high energy one?"

Aizawa scoffed, "That's when he's gotten his beauty sleep. No. When I tried waking him up this morning, my wonderful husband told me in no uncertain terms that he would murder me if I tried to wake him up before 10 am."

Hitoshi raised an eyebrow, "And what time was this?"

Aizawa smirked, "10:02."

"Figures." Hitoshi chuckled. "At least he'll be rocking those eyebags so he matches the rest of the family." He took another gulp of coffee and grimaced. "This is doing absolutely nothing."

Aizawa rolled his eyes. "It's coffee, kid, not magic."

The conversation fizzled out and both of them were more than happy to embrace the silence as they waited for the coffee to kick in. It was nice and relaxing and Hitoshi was actually starting to nod off again when his phone suddenly vibrated loudly against the table and startled him so badly that he almost fell out of his chair.

He scrambled toward the phone and picked it up, "Hi?"

"Good Morning!" Ochako's voice was cheerful and loud enough that Hitoshi had to hold the phone a few inches away from his ear. "Are you ready for me to pick you up?"

Hitoshi blinked, "What?"

"Mina invited everyone to the mall, remember?" Ochako said. "Don't tell me you're gonna bail! I was gonna come over and we were gonna get you more used to teleporting with me, remember?"

"That was today?!" HItoshi rubbed at the bridge of his nose. "Of all the...yeah, uh, just… everyone's coming, right?"

"Yeah, I think Mina managed to convince everyone." Ochako answered. "Why?"

"Uh, no reason." Hitoshi's brain was racing as sluggishly as humanly possible. If everyone was going to be there, then that meant that

Todoroki was going to be there and at this point they had no clue if he was a villain or not. It might be a good idea to watch him and see if he was acting suspiciously for any reason, but at the end of the day, it probably wasn't Hitoshi's call. Aizawa was the homeroom teacher and the hero most responsible for Todoroki at the moment, since Endeavor had obviously noped out of the position, so anything Hitoshi planned on doing definitely needed to be cleared with him first. "I uh..right. Ok. Let me just check something out with Dad real quick and then I'll text you when I'm ready to go."

Hitoshi hung up quickly and turned to Aizawa, who looked shocked for some reason, but Hitoshi shook it off. They were both too tired to really care at this point, "I forgot that a bunch of our classmates are going to the mall today and I already promised Ochako I'd tag along. I was thinking that since Mina's dragged pretty much everyone into going, then there's a really good chance that Todoroki is going too. I'm assuming you want me to keep a close eye on him, right? I know we hadn't really discussed what we were going to *do,* but I figured that if he's working with the villains..."

Aizawa shook himself out of whatever stupor he'd been in and frowned. "I have a meeting with Nedzu today to inform him of the situation, but there's still so much we just don't know. It would be illogical and unfair of me to ask you to do a job when both the danger and the threat level are both still completely unknown. "

"But you're not asking. I'm volunteering, " Hitoshi pointed out. "And he's my classmate, so if he is a villain I'm already kind of at risk."

"Which is the only reason I'm not telling you to avoid him entirely." Aizawa said firmly. "Go, have fun with your friends, but if Todoroki starts acting oddly, inform us instead of going after him yourself. He shouldn't be your top priority and I don't want you putting yourself in danger. Got it, kid?"

"Got it." Hitoshi stood and nodded to Mic as he walked into the room. "I gotta go, I'll talk to you guys later."

"Alright kiddo!" Mic gave him a knowing smile. "Have a great day."

"Ok?" Hitoshi shook his head and went to go get dressed. His adults were so weird.

Shouta stared after Hitoshi as he ran back to his room, "Did he just…"

Mic grinned widely, “Yeah. Yeah, he did. Our kid just called you Dad, Shou. How do you feel?”

Shouta groaned, “I think I need a nap.”

Tomura walked into the bar only to see Kurogiri talking to Giran and two NPCs that he’d never seen before, “What’s going on?”

Kurogiri heaved a disappointed sigh and gave him a look, “First of all, you’re late. Second of all, allow me to introduce our new recruits. This is Dabi and the young woman next to him is Toga. They have come to join us because of our alliance with Stain’s successor.”

Tomura tried not to grimace as he remembered that there was a *reason* they’d taken Spinner out on that murder spree. He didn’t *want* new recruits, he wanted to get an apartment and try the newest video games. Sensei had raised him to beat All Might, but at the end of the day, that wasn’t what Tomura really cared about. He *wanted* to beat bosses, sure, but it was a lot more effective to get that sense of accomplishment from gaming rather than murder. There were more bosses to beat, for one, and fewer consequences when he failed.

Eventually, he just huffed, “So why are you NPCs here?”

The one Kurogiri had introduced as Dabi raised an eyebrow, “To join your little group. I guess you’re just as stupid as you look.”

“Not that, you idiot.” Tomura growled. “I mean, why do you wanna join? What objective are you after?”

Dabi gave him an appraising look, but Toga jumped right in, “I *loved* Mr. Stainy! I wanna kill people and drink their blood just like he did! I wanna meet his apprentice and drink *his* blood too!”

“That…” Tomura wrinkled his nose. “That’s something, I guess. And what about you, patchwork? Why are you here?”

“To expose the fakes masquerading as heroes.” Dabi replied, not breaking eye contact. “What about you? Is your reason good enough to follow you?”

“I’m just here to beat the big boss.” Tomura snapped. “I don’t really care if you join the party or not, so if you don’t like that, go find your own side-quest or whatever.”

“Tomura!” Kurogiri shouted at him as he shouldered past the new recruits and tore open the door. “You must forgive him. Our leader knows what he must do. Allow him to clear his thoughts and we’ll get back to you on recruitment.”

Tomura slammed the door behind him, resisting the urge to disintegrate it completely. Drinking blood and exposing heroes. On the surface, those seemed like great reasons to be a villain, but at the same time, there were other ways to make those things happen legally. Even if there wasn’t, though, Tomura couldn’t get the thought out of his head that Sensei was going to find a way to twist these guys' goals for his own purposes. With how *he* had been manipulated over the years, Tomura could only imagine what those two would be like once he was done with them. Could he really just stand by and let that happen?

Maybe Kurogiri was right. He needed to clear his head.

Hitoshi took a few deep breaths as the world righted itself again. Ochako had given him some anti-nausea medication before they’d left and Izuku had printed off an entire booklet of strategies for him to try, so he managed not to throw up his coffee, but it still took him a couple minutes to feel good enough to start looking around, “Uh, Ochako? I thought we were going to the mall, why are we at Izuku’s place?”

Ochako blushed deeply, “Well, um, I was just thinking, um, that everyone in class kinda knows *of* them, but no one really knows them and it might be nice to have a buffer...I mean, it might be nice to let people meet them!”

Hitoshi blinked. If the worst case scenario happened and Todoroki *was* the traitor, Izuku was Cheat Code. He and Mei had already proven that they were capable of fighting the league, so if things went south, it would be super useful to have them around. Ochako was looking forward to just having a normal shopping trip, though, and if he told his kidnappers about Todoroki, they’d probably jump into the whole situation with both feet and the whole idea of a *normal outing with friends* would fly out the window...He could always tell them after, or even bring it up later if Todoroki started acting suspicious. He was supposed to be leaving it to Aizawa anyway, right?

“Oh, uh, yeah!” Hitoshi laughed awkwardly. “That sounds great. Uh, do they know we’re coming?”

Ochako nodded, “Yep! I texted them both yesterday and Mei said she’d meet us at Izuku’s. I tried texting you too, but uh…you weren’t really responding, so…”

“Oh, uh, I was…busy.” Hitoshi grimaced. “Sorry.”

Ochako shrugged, “You were spending time with your adults right? I noticed you called Aizawa *Dad* earlier, so that must be going well.”

Hitoshi did a double take, “What? No, I didn’t.”

“Uh, yeah you did.” Ochako gave him a confused look. “You said, and I quote, *I have to check something out with Dad real quick, so I’ll text you.* You totally called him Dad, Shindig.”

Hitoshi opened his mouth to deny it again, then froze in realization as his brain caught up, “Oh no. I called Aizawa Dad. In front of him. And Mic was just around the corner so he probably heard. Ugh, no wonder they were acting so weird! I called Aizawa *Dad!* ”

Ochako patted his back, “There, there…uh, at least he didn’t call you out on it?”

“That just makes it worse.” Hitoshi groaned.

Right at that moment, Mei and Izuku came running down the stairs…or Izuku was running and Mei was trying to slide down the bannister, “Extra-Credit-Kun, what took you so long? We’ve been waiting forever!”

“You only know that because Mom asked why we were still there.” Izuku pointed out. “You wouldn’t have noticed otherwise because you were too busy showing me the plans you have to make Tensei’s wheelchair fly.”

“Levitate.” Mei corrected. “It would be too energy inefficient to actually make it fly for long periods. Too much fuel would just slow him down!”

Ochako giggled, “You two are so cute sometimes! You’re like an old married couple!”

Izuku frowned, “Why does everyone always say that?”

Chapter End Notes

Next Expected Update: October 11, 2021 (MDT)

Interweaving

Chapter Summary

Getting to the mall.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The walk from Izuku's apartment to the mall wasn't too bad, but they did have to take the train. If she had been alone, Ochako could have easily just anchored to Mina and been there in the blink of an eye, but Mei and Izuku had never teleported with her before and she didn't want to put Hitoshi through that twice in a row like she had with All Might, so she was happy just walk and spend time with her friends.

Mina saw them walk in the door and grinned as she called out to them, "Ochako! Shinso! Over here!"

Ochako was right at her side before she even realized she'd activated her quirk, "Hey everybody! How's it going?"

"Pretty well. No complaints." Jiro shrugged. "Those your friends form teh support course, right?"

"Oh yeah!" Ochako smiled as the other three walked over. "Everybody, this is Izuku Midoriya and Mei Hatsume. You might recognize them from the sports festival!"

"Of course." Kirishima grinned. "How could we forget the crazy team that blew up the ten million point headband?"

"It was savage, but effective." Todoroki said simply. "Definitely impactful."

"Oh yeah! That was Izu-kun's idea!" Mei said proudly, elbowing Izuku. "It was so much fun to see if we could actually pull it off!"

"Mei!" Izuku blushed and shoved her away gently. "I mean, it wasn't *that* cool. We were trying to make an impact and that was just a pretty simple way to do it, you know?"

Ochako caught Mina looking at her out of the corner of her eye and turned toward her. Mina's eyes narrowed and she cast a pointed glance toward Mei and Izuku. Ochako shrugged and looked away. Ok, so maybe bringing along those two hadn't been the most subtle strategy, but if everyone was focused on the support gremlins, then it would take attention off her and HItoshi. Mina probably wouldn't get too distracted, but it would hopefully keep the rest of the class from joining in on whatever scheme she'd cooked up to try and get her and Shindig alone together. Hopefully.

"So, are we going to actually shop or did you extras just drag me along to hang out with Deku?" Bakugo shot a glare toward Izuku. "And don't pretend like it wasn't you and your little girlfriend that planted that glitter bomb, Deku. I *know* it was you."

"I...It…" Izuku stuttered. "She's not my girlfriend!"

Mina's head whipped around in surprise, "Wait, you're not?!"

Ochako let out a quiet sigh of relief. New friends might not be enough to distract her, but new targets *definitely* would. She felt a little guilty for kinda-not-really throwing Mei and Izuku under the bus, but...well, like, it was probably high time for them to get together anyway and everybody already thought they were dating so...she'd have to apologize later, but for now, she was just going to take it for the blessing it was.

"Come now, Ashido, it's impolite to meddle in other's love lives!" Tenya said, chopping the air with his robotic arm. "That being said, I had been under the impression that you two were dating. My apologies for making assumptions."

"It's fine." Izuku blushed. "Don't worry about it."

"Yeah, Izu-kun and I have more important things to worry about than what other people think!" Mei said. "We've got these great projects and we really need to prepare for the design bootcamp and make sure you all have the right support items for your little camping trip and…"

"And I think we should split up!" Mina declared. "We're not shopping for the same things, right? So that means that it's gonna be more effective shopping in small groups and stuff! Groups of two should work, right?"

"That sounds wonderful." Yaoyorozu said, ignoring the way that Mina

was winking at Ochako. “And then we can meet back here for lunch!”

Before Ochako could figure out what Mina had planned, she was already being dragged by the arm in Hitoshi’s general direction. Mina grinned at her as she pushed her into Hitoshi’s arms, “You two have fun! Take good care of her, Shinso, you hear?”

“Uh…” Hitoshi just blinked in confusion. “Ok…?”

Mina nodded in satisfaction as she grabbed Mei’s arm with one hand and Izuku’s with the other, “You two are support kids right? I saw this science shop with lots of cool toys, so why don’t you two go have fun there…”

Within seconds everyone had split off and Ochako realized that Mina was a lot better at multitasking different targets than she’d anticipated, “What just happened?”

“Uh...I dunno.” Hitoshi stared blankly in the direction his kidnappers had just disappeared in. “But I think you’re stuck with me.”

Ochako sighed, turning away to hide her red cheeks, “I mean, that’s not the *worst* thing, right?”

Hitoshi smiled softly, “No, it’s not.”

Izuku and Mei looked around the store that Mina had abandoned them in and Izuku frowned, “You can totally build everything in here, can’t you?”

“Yep!” Mei huffed. “I think I made a version of that little electricity ball thing they’re so proud of when I was eight.”

“So…?” Izuku frowned. “What do you want to do, then? Do you want to meet back up with Hitoshi and Ochako?”

“Sure!” Mei smiled. “Do you know where they are?”

“No. I could always just use my tracking program to see where Ochako is.” Izuku trailed off as he saw the security cameras in the corner of the store. “Or we could have a little fun first and find them the hard way.”

Tomura didn’t know exactly where he was going, mostly just wandering and *clearing his head* , like Kurogiri had suggested. He just

felt so conflicted and he hated it. Why did he have to care so much, it's not like he had any stake in those stupid NPCs lives. What did he care if Sensei manipulated them? For all he knew, they *wanted* to be villains and killed people because they thought it was fun, not because they were taught from a young age that it was the ideal outlet for spare rage. They probably weren't like him or if they were, they didn't care. Plus, at the root of it all, Tomura wasn't a hero. He didn't save people. As of right now, he couldn't even save himself.

He'd found an apartment, finally, one with absolutely zero ties to All for One and a decent monthly payment, but if he wanted it, he'd need some ID, preferably for an identity that Sensei didn't know about, which meant that he couldn't just go to Girian and get one. It was possible, sure, but was it worth it? If Sensei never found out, things would be fine, but if he *did* find out, then what? If he knew Tomura was trying to leave, would he just kill him without hesitation or would he find a way to manipulate those desires into his own evil plans. Tomura wasn't sure which option was more frightening, but both were something he would prefer to avoid. Life sucked.

Eventually, he decided to head toward the mall. There was a new zombie game that had come out a few days ago that he wanted to try it out. He pulled up his hood and made his way there without anyone recognizing him, not that he thought they would. Even after the USJ attack, his face hadn't really been on the news and people weren't expecting him, so everyone just assumed they were safe. They didn't even know how many villains were hiding among them just waiting for the right moment to strike, but at least they were doing their best to enjoy their lives despite that. Tomura...he kind of wanted that, honestly. He didn't even need to be *safe,* just free and normal.

He groaned in frustration as he got to the mall. Whatever, all this stupid worrying was just exhausting. He just wanted to get his stupid game and get out of here. He almost stopped short when he saw that brainwashing kid from the sports festival alongside that anti-gravity brat that Trapper had said could teleport. There were hero students here?!

He huffed and pulled his hood forward just a little more. He'd just have to avoid them and hope that if Todoroki was with them, he had the good sense to keep his mouth shut. So much for a relaxing walk.

For someone who was trying to keep an eye on Todoroki, Hitoshi sure had lost sight of him quickly. It wasn't his fault, he'd been focused on

Mina dragging Izuku and Mei away and by the time he'd realized what was happening, pretty much everyone had split up and Todoroki was gone. At least he was with Ochako and not one of the classmates he didn't know as well. *That* would have been awkward as hell. It was still kinda awkward, of course, and Ochako seemed nervous for some reason, but she was amazing, so even if he didn't know what to say, she wouldn't judge him. Definitely better than getting stuck with a stranger.

"So, um...I don't really need anything besides bug spray." Ochako said quietly. "Um...what about you?"

Hitoshi shrugged and sat down next to the fountain, "I don't really need a whole lot of stuff and, like, you've seen Aizawa. He carries around a sleeping bag every single day, so I'm pretty sure we're good on camping gear."

"You've got a point." Ochako giggled as she sat down next to him. "Are you looking forward to the camp?"

"Oh yeah." Hitoshi nodded. "My quirk still has a lot of untapped potential and I've got an entire packet of suggestions from Izuku on what to do with it."

"Don't we all?" Ochako huffed, swinging her legs back and forth. "I feel like the biggest thing is picking just one goal to focus on, you know? Like do I want to focus on telelporting farther? Or carrying more weight? Or maybe getting our classmates used to the g-forces so I can take them with me? There's so many things I need to improve, it's hard to know where to start, you know?"

"Defninatly." Hitoshi agreed. "I've been thinking about working on my information gathering skills, you know? Because Izuku ran some tests a while ago and figured out the *theory* of it, but we never got any farther than that."

"Hmm…" Ochako frowned. "So you can't just ask someone a question and they answer?"

"It's not that simple." Hitoshi sighed. "I can order them to tell me something I already know pretty easily, but getting new info requires partial control. It's like I'm the gps, but they're driving the car. Theoretically possible, but we've all been so busy with the sports festival and then everything that's been happening with your quirk that I havne't really worked on it much yet."

“That…that sounds really cool, but also really complicated.” Ochako said. “But then again, I teleport based on people’s gravitational fields, so I guess I can’t really talk.”

“It’s kinda the same idea of holding the connection without taking control.” Hitoshi shrugged. “And I had to get *really* good at that during the sports festival, so my brain knows what it needs to do, I just don’t have much practice doing it yet.”

Ochako frowned for a moment before her eyes lit up in determination, “Then let’s practice!”

Hitoshi jerked back slightly, “What?”

“Well, you let me practice my quirk on you today right?” Ochako said. “So it’s only fair to return the favor. Come on! Try to get me to answer something you don’t know!”

“Uh…ok. Are you sure?” Hitoshi asked.

Ochako rolled her eyes, “Just hurry up and brainwash me already!”

“Fine.” Hitoshi smiled and did his best to only take half control. It felt really weird, like he was half inside and half outside her brain. “Ok, so…what’s a good, dumb question that I don’t already know the answer to? Um…ok, got it. Why do you think Mina dragged Mei and Izuku off so fast?”

Ochako didn’t respond and Hitoshi facepalm, “Oh, wait, that’s not gonna work, I’m pretty sure I have to phrase it as an order. Tell me why you think Mina dragged Mei and Izuku off so fast.”

He knew it worked when he felt some resistance over the bond and Ochako started speaking in an odd monotone, “Because she’s trying to set them up. She was also trying to get us alone together because she knows I have a crush on you.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: October 18, 2021 (MDT)

Spotted

Chapter Summary

Well, well, well, if it isn't the consequences of past actions.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Kai
Gl!tch existential magical girl dread

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mei had picked the lock on one of the supply closets to give them some privacy while Izuku hacked his way into the camera systems. It had taken a little finangling to do it, but Nedzu had been teaching him a lot of cool tricks, so it didn't take him long to figure out how to connect to the camera system and get all the access he wanted. It was *so* much easier than hacking UA, "So, if I were a pair of hero students, where would I be?"

"Their class was coming here to buy stuff for their camp, right?" Mei asked. "So maybe the sporty things store?"

"I don't think that's what it's called, but I'll try it." Izuku said, flipping through the camera feeds. "Nope. There's Ojiro and Sato, but not who we're looking for...hmmm, where else would they be? Maybe we should just start from the main plaza and go from there?"

He started looking around the plaza, just scanning until he saw something promising, "Is that them? Right there by the fountain?"

"Yeah!" Mei leaned closer to the screen. "Aww, Ochako's blushing! How cute!"

Izuku caught sight of something behind them and narrowed his eyes. It was just some guy in a black hoodie, but for some reason it was setting off alarm bells in Izuku's head, "Hey Mei-chan. Does that guy look familiar to you?"

He zoomed in on hoodie guy and Mei frowned, "I mean, kinda? His

posture *is* pretty unique, but it's hard to tell without being able to see his face. Can you get me another angle?"

"Sure." Izuku panned through different cameras until he found one with a good angle and zoomed in. Before he fully processed what he'd seen, he was already scrambling backwards, knocking over a broom in his attempt to get as far from what was on the screen as possible. After a long moment of staring at the screen, he shot a panicked look over to Mei, who looked just as terrified as he was, "It's the league. They're here."

Hitoshi panicked and dropped his control, "I am so sorry. I...I should have picked a different question. I didn't even think it would actually work. I am...I can…"

"It's...it's fine…" Ochako was bright red and looked like she was about to cry which made Hitoshi feel even worse. "I guess, uh, lesson learned! Create a list of questions beforehand, right?"

"Yeah." Hitoshi swallowed. "I...I am so sorry."

"It was an accident!" Ochako squeaked. "We can just drop it. I mean, I know you probably don't feel the same way…"

"Oh no, I do, it's just..." Hitoshi froze, eyes going wide. "Uh…I did not mean to...ok, that just happened. Pretty sure I just made this even more awkward. Don't you usually disappear by this point in a conversation?"

"When I teleport by accident, it's because I'm thinking of the person." Ochako buried her face in her hands. "That's kinda hard when the person you're thinking of is right in front of you."

"Oh." Hitoshi nodded numbly. "Yeah. So basically, we're just a mess."

Ochako gave him a pained smile, "Yep. Yeah. Pretty sure."

Izuku couldn't think. He wasn't even really seeing the screen, much less the supply closet around him. All he could see was Shigaraki disintegrating a guy to dust right in front of him, just because Izuku had been meddling in things he wasn't supposed to and messing up his plans. They couldn't let that happen again.

"We…" Izuku's mouth was dry as he tried to think of what to do next.

“We need to get everyone out.”

“Right.” Mei nodded in determination. “We don't know when the rest of their forces will show up and we can't risk them cutting off the exits and repeating the USJ attack.”

“Ok...We need...can we contact the students?...What about the police?” Izuku muttered, his brain spinning with so many ideas and possibilities, but he still couldn’t *think*. There was no way he’d be able to decide on a course of action. “How can we get everyone out safely…?”

Thankfully, while he was frozen, Mei jumped into action. She threw open the door, running out into the hall before he could yell at her to stop. Izuku didn’t realize what she was planning until she made a beeline for the fire alarm outside and pulled it as hard as she could, “Done. Now let’s inform Nedzu and get someplace safe.”

She ran back to him and yanked him to his feet, and Izuku barely had time to hug his computer against his chest before he was being dragged down the hall, “Ok. Yeah, that works.”

Ochako and Hitoshi both jumped when the fire alarm went off. Ochako looked around, but couldn’t see any smoke, “What's going on?”

Hitoshi frowned, “I dunno, but Izuku and Mei probably do. If not, they can probably find out.”

“Right.” Ochako’s face hardened in determination as she called up her quirk. “I’ll be back.”

The world tilted and she ran to catch up to Izuku and Mei, who were running down an alley just outside of the mall, “Do you guys know what's going on? Why are you out here instead of inside?”

Izuku shot her a glance, but he had a phone held up to his ear and stayed focused on his call as Mei filled her in, “We caught sight of Shigaraki on the security cams. Izu-kun’s on the phone with Nedzu right now to get heroes on the way in case it turns into a full scale attack.”

Ochako gulped, “So not just a fire drill?”

“No.” Mei replied gravely. “Not just a fire drill.”

Izuku hung up the phone and turned to Ochako, “You’ve got anchors on everyone in class 1A, right?”

“Yeah, I do.” Ochako said. “You want me to let everyone know?”

Izuku took a deep breath, “Yes. Tell everyone that Nedzu’s authorized us to help with evacuation but not combat. If you see Shigaraki or any other villains just run. Got it?”

“Got it.” Ochako confirmed.

Izuku’s face was grim, “Good luck.”

Shouto didn’t really *need* to buy anything for the camping trip, since he’d basically been living a camping trip since his old man had kicked him out and his quirk took the place of a lot of camping essentials like sleeping bags, flashlights, and matches. Still, he didn’t have anything better to do, so he figured he might as well tag along. It was nice having a little disposable income again, but now that he’d been living off practically nothing, it was a lot harder to justify spending any of it.

After everyone had split off, he’d found himself in a store that Shigaraki would either love or think was absolutely ridiculous, considering that it only sold merchandise for games and tv shows and nothing really *useful.* , but Shouto thought it was entertaining to see how much he recognized from the various games Shigaraki had introduced him to. When the fire alarm had gone off, he’d been looking at a section of nerdy pet collars that would have been great if Epurr was an inside cat or well, if Shouto actually hadn an *inside* to put her.

He hadn’t really been too concerned about the alarm at first. If it was a drill, then that was just fine, and if not then he was immune to the heat and could always use his ice to put out the fire if he needed to. He’d been content to follow along at the tail end of the evacuation crowd until Uraaraka had suddenly appeared right next to him and immediately started talking, “Shigaraki is here in the mall. The heroes are already on their way. We’ve been authorized to help with evacuation until they arrive, but not combat. Got it?”

Shouto kept his face carefully blank as he nodded, “Yes. I understand.”

As soon as Uraraka disappeared, Shouto immediately jumped into action and started running toward the nearest video game store, “Dusty, you idiot, where the hell are you?”

Hitoshi wasn't too surprised to get a call from his kidnappers after ochako didn't come back, so he answered right away, "What do you need me to do?"

"Add Izu-kun to your class group chat thingy." Mei rushed out. "Put him under the name of cheat code so everybody knows to trust him, alright?"

"Right." Hitoshi wasn't even finished responding before Mei hung up. Hitoshi knew that Izuku was probably busy trying to coordinate with the heroes, but he still added Izuku to the group chat as quickly as possible, making sure to change his name to Cheat Code first so that that's what he would show up under. He sent a quick text to both Izuku and Mei letting them know that he was done and hurried to join the evacuation.

So much for a relaxing class trip to the mall.

Chapter End Notes

October 25, 2021 (MDT)

Damage Control

Chapter Summary

The mall "attack" levels up.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Claire;P

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The fire alarm was really annoying. Tomura had just wanted to buy a stupid game but in addition to being loud, the alarm menat that the workers were shutting down the store and sweeping everybody out. There probably wasn't even a fire, it was most likely just a bunch of dumb kids who'd pulled the fire alarm to be funny. It was pissing him off.

Tomura shoved his hands in his pockets and kept his head down as he made his way toward the door. He wouldn't be getting his game today, so there wasn't any point in sticking around until the fire department decided to show up and investigate. He'd better be getting back to the league anyway, even if the new push for recruitment left a bad taste in his mouth. All for One was going to do whatever he wanted anyway, so what was even the point in Tomura pretending he even had a say in any of it?

There was a commotion as someone forced their way into the store and Tomura barely had any time to recognize Todoroki before he was grabbed by the arm and dragged behind one of the shelves, "Are you really attacking us right now? Seriously? If you are, I swear to god, I will…"

"What?!" Tomura yanked his arm away and looked at Todoroki in disbelief, "I'm not...what are you even talking about?! I'm just here to get a stupid game!"

Todorki narrowed his eyes, "So you and your little gang aren't here to target our class?"

“I’m the only one here, you idiot.” Tomura snapped. “Well, unless that little creep…no, we agreed no spoilers. Whatever, why in the world would I be attacking you? I didn’t even know you’d be here!”

“Thank god.” Immediately, Todoroki deflated in relief. “Then you need to get out of here. Now. Somehow, Cheat Code caught sight of you on the cameras and everyone thinks it’s going to turn into another USJ. The heroes are already on their way.”

Mineta fumed silently as Kaminari listened raptly to Uraraka’s report. What did that stupid gaming geek think he was doing? Launching an attack just days before the actual attack they had *planned?!* He was going to show their card and ruin everything! Mineta seriously had no idea what All for One saw in him anyway. Beyond the destructive quirk, he never even *did* anything! He didn’t deserve to be sensei’s successor!

Uraraka disappeared and Kaminari’s hands sparked nervously, “Do…do you really think we’re gonna have to fight again?! Last time I ended up useless!”

“Why would the league attack now?!” Mineta forced himself to stay in character. “Our class totally isn’t ready!”

Nothing was ready, the timing was totally wrong! If Shigaraki actually attacked now…wait, did that idiot actually plan this or did he just get angry and decide to dust someone just because? Of course he couldn’t kill someone when it actually mattered, but when it messed up all their plans, it was no big deal. That guy was such a *child* sometimes, seriously.

He followed a step behind Kaminari until they ran into a group of people that was large enough for Mineta to pretend he’d just gotten separated in the crowd. Would they even be able to attack the camp after this? Or worse, would this just make the league a laughing stock? They already had one failed attack under their belts thanks to Cheat Code, but if word got to the media that Shigaraki was here and pretty much no damage was done, it would make it seem like they weren’t dangerous at all! They couldn't’ afford that, not when they were just barely seeing the recruitment results from their alliance with Spinner.

Mineta pulled out his phone and almost did a double take when he saw that Shinso had added someone named *Cheat Code* to the chat. He had Cheat Code’s number now…he shook his head. He’d figure out

how to use that to his advantage later. The important part was that he had confirmation that Shinso was close to Cheat Code and he'd be able to know the heroes' next moves if he kept his eye on the chat. For now, he just had to make sure he was on the same page with the rest of the league.

"Ah, yes, Trapper." Kurogiri answered quickly, thankfully. "I had thought you were simply maintaining your cover today."

"That's what *I* thought as well." Mineta hissed. "But apparently Sensei's little brat had other plans. Did you know that the league is attacking the mall today?"

There was tell-tale silence on the other end of the phone for a long moment, "I...had not been made aware, no. I had thought Young Tomura was simply on a walk to clear his head."

"Yeah?" Mineta scowled. "Well apparently he got himself spotted and now my entire class is preparing for USJ, take two."

"This is…unfortunate timing." Kurogiri said carefully. "I will have to discuss this with Young Master Tomura…"

"There's not a whole lot of time for that." Mineta cut him off. "Right now, we need to focus on damage control. Like you said, we can't afford to show our hand, but we also can't afford not to attack, because then it will look like we're nothing but cowards running away from the heroes."

"Ah…" Kurogir's voice was grim. "So we have been caught in a catch 22."

Mineta frowned thoughtfully, "Not necessarily. It isn't the best, but there might still be a way to turn this to our advantage. We have new recruits for the training camp, right?"

"Assuming that Tomura approves it, then yes." Kurogiri replied.

"Well considering that this whole fiasco is his fault, then he's going to have to." Mineta rolled his eyes. "Get yourself and Spinner over here. That shouldn't give them any new info and there's enough of my classmates around that he should have plenty of *false heroes* to choose from. If we're lucky, no one will suspect two attacks so close together and we can use this to camouflage our next move."

"A solid strategy, young Trapper." Kurogiri said smoothly. "Sensei will

be proud."

Mineta growled as he hung up and ran to catch up with Kaminari, "He better be."

Todoroki kept a bit of distance between him and Shigaraki as they made their way out of the store. On the one hand, he was *really* glad that they weren't being attacked right now, but on the other, he...he was terrified that Shigaraki wasn't going to get out of this and that scared him. He was supposed to be a hero, he shouldn't be even considering letting a villain like Shigaraki escape, much less helping him. He should have immediately let his classmates know where to find him and cornered him together or even just trapped him in an ice cube immediately. So why was he giving him a chance to run?

Despite everything that he knew he *should* do, all he did when they got into the hall was nod and start walking in the opposite direction. If it had been an actual attack, then he would have fought him...right? He hoped so, at least. That's what being a hero was all about, but still, why had his first instinct been to warn the villain instead of capturing him?

The gaming store they'd been in was on the second floor, and with mass evacuation from the fire alarm, there were now a lot of people crowding around th4 stairs and escalators waiting to get down. According to Uraraka, their class had been authorized to help with evacuation, so it might be good to make a slide down to the first level to help with the bottleneck. There wasn't any *real* rush to get everyone out, since this was just a big misunderstanding and not an actual villain attack, but he didn't really have a way to communicate that to everyone and even if he *did* , how was he supposed to explain *how* he knew? He didn't really know the words to describe his weird relationship to his co-streamer and if he said that Shigaraki had told him that it wasn't a real attack, his classmates would just get the wrong idea. No, the best strategy when things went wrong in a game was to keep following the rules of the current quest until things calmed down a little more, which would happen as soon as Shigaraki left and everyone realized that there wasn't any real danger.

Suddenly, Shouto heard screaming in the plaza below them. The screams were loud enough that he could hear them above the sound of the alarms, so he ran to the balcony just in time to see a lizard man with a katana crawl out of a smoking portal and stick himself to the fountain. That portal...that was Kurogiri. If Kurogiri was here, that

meant...Shigaraki lied.

He didn't know why the realization left him feeling nauseous, of course Shigaraki was going to lie. He was a villain, that's what he *did.* Shouto really didn't have any right to be surprised. God, he was such an *idiot!*

Shouto's face hardened and he whirled around, ice already coating his arm as he prepared to encase Shigaraki in an instant glacier, only to be distracted by more screams and the railing on the balcony suddenly disintegrated into dust. Everyone who had been leaning against it like Shouto had been screamed and had to jump back to avoid falling, but of course, not everyone was fast enough. Shouto lept into action, jumping off the balcony as a sheet of ice exploded out from his right root and created a ledge to catch everyone who had fallen. He slid along the ice, building underneath him as he went. When he got to the main level, he glided to a stop and took a quick moment to look around and make sure everyone he'd saved was alright, then immediately looked up to glare at Shigaraki before stopping cold.

Shigaraki looked horrified. His hands were grasping in midair and Shouto could just imagine him running to the railing just like everyone else had and accidentally gripping the metal with all five fingers. His eyes were blown wide, glued to the portal in barely concealed panic and Shouto swallowed as a horrible realization hit him.

Shigaraki didn't know.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: November 1, 2021 (MDT)

Miscommunication

Chapter Summary

Well, now that there's an attack...

Chapter Notes

Memes!
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Izuku and Mei had run until they had found someplace relatively safe to set up camp. Well, maybe the lobby of an abandoned apartment building wasn't necessarily *safe,* but it was far enough away from the mall that Shigaraki's decay wouldn't be able to reach them and a random enough location that Kurogiri would have a hard time finding them. At least, that's what Izuku was counting on.

Izuku's laptop was still connected to the security feed from the mall and the first thing he saw when he opened up the screen again was a portal opening above the fountain. He gulped and looked at Mei, "We were right."

Mei nodded grimly, "They can't seal off the exits, right?"

"Not while the fire alarms are going off." Izuku cracked his neck and scooted closer to the screen. "At least not easily, but if they try, I'll know. How's 1A doing?"

Mei grabbed for Izuku's phone and opened the group chat, "About half of the class has responded since Exta-Credit-Kun added *Cheat Code,* and Aoyama says that the lizard guy who just came through the portal is named Spinner."

"Most likely the new hero killer, judging by the katana." Izuku said absently. "Wait...isn't that where Hitoshi was?! I, uh, I think we might need to call Nedzu again..."

Hitoshi stared at the lizard guy, *Spinner,* as he screamed out his challenge. He...he didn't have permission to brainwash him. He only had permission to help civilians right now, not fight the villains. He was also pretty sure that Todoroki had been upstairs with Shigaraki when the portal had appeared, which was pretty much all the proof they needed that it was *him* who had given the league their location

and created the opening for this attack. He couldn't afford to worry about that right now though. Todoroki still believed his cover was secure which meant that he wouldn't risk attacking them directly. That meant that the biggest threats were from Kurogiri, shigaraki , Spinner, and another villain named Trapper that his adults hd mentioned was working witht eh league as well. And of those, only one was currently brandishing a sword at him.

Spinner glared at him as he hopped down off the fountain, sword in hand, “You’re one of those UA brats, aren’t you? I recognize you from the sports festival. Are you a true hero or just another one of those fakes?”

Hitoshi swallowed, but didn’t move. The heroes were already on their way before the portal even appeared, which meant that they had somewhere between five to ten minutes before anyone showed up to help them, less if they were lucky. That *should* be well within the window of time where Hitoshi could activate his quirk without taking full control of his target.

With half a plan in mind, Hitoshi stepped forward, smirking sharply has he spread his arms wide, “I dunno. Maybe I’m a fake or maybe I’m just that awesome. How would you know either way?”

Spinner’s hand tightened on his sword, “I will cull the fakes. If you survive, then perhaps you deserve the title of a true hero.”

Hitoshi’s smirk widened. *Bingo.*

Ochako had developed a new appreciation for how hard izuku worked. Kurogiri had appeared in the plaza less than a minute after she’d finished telling 1A about Shigaraki and she’d had the *brilliant* idea to follow him before she realized just how hard it was to track a teleporter. Unlike Mei and Izuku, She didn’t have any fancy tech to help her out and even though she’d come close several times at the USJ, she’d never actually *touched* him, which meant that she couldn't anchor to him directly. Instead, she was having to rely on just tracking him visually, which so far basically came out to a large scale game of wack-a-mole. Every time she saw a wisp of purple smoke, she had to find her nearest classte, anchor to them, and just guestimate to try and get close to him. She’d kept him too busy to be able to warp any other villains in through, so that was *something* at least.

She hadn’t managed to get close until Kurogiri did a shorter jump than usual and he had accidentally gotten close enough to Sero that

Ochako didn't even have to think about it before she was right next to him and reaching out for his neck armor, only for her fingers to close around thin air as he disappeared again.

“I’m afraid I can’t let you do that.” Kurogiri said smoothly, appearing just behind her. “Your quirk allows you to teleport to anyone you touch, correct? I’m sure you can understand why that might be inconvenient for someone in my position.”

Ochako growled and lunged for him, but again was left only with a fistful of purple smoke, “Well that’s frustrating...how did he even know?”

Izuku facepalmed as he watched Hitoshi walk *towards* the villain with the massive sword, “Why did we pick that one?”

“Because he’s going to be an amazing hero if he lives.” Mei groaned. “What in the world is he thinking?!”

“Most likely that he can establish a connection with his quirk and activate it as soon as the heroes give him permission.” Izuku sighed. “And it looks like Ochako is chasing Kurogiri. They’re both gonna get in trouble if the heroes don't’ get there soon.”

“Or if they don’t get permission to fight.” Mei already had her phone in her hand. “We were gonna call Nedzu again anyway.”

She put the phone on speaker and let it ring until Nedzu answered, which didn’t take very long at all, “Hello children! How goes the evacuation?”

“It looks like about half the civilians are out of the mall.” Izuku reported. “But they’re going faster now that the rest of the league has shown up.”

“Oh no.” Nedzu hummed. “That’s not good. We already have several heroes on their way. Hawks is approximately three minutes away. He wasn’t in the area, but his faster speed means he’ll make it there faster than some of the heroes that were supposed to be closer. Can the hero students hold out until then?”

“Not without permission to defend themselves.” Mei snapped. “That crazy sword guy’s got his eye on extra-credit-kun and Gravity Girl is the only one who’s gonna be able to keep up with Kurogiri and…”

“You understand why I can’t give children full permission to use their quirks, Miss Hatsume.” Nedzu said firmly. “If one of you gets hurt, or worse, hurts someone else, then that could be disastrous not only for the students involved, but for UA as a whole.”

Mei looked livid, “But…!’

“That is not to say that I am willing to leave our students completely helpless.” Nedzu cut in quickly. “However, the permission will need to be conditional. I can authorize them to defend themselves against direct attacks, but they *cannot* initiate, will that do?”

“It’ll have to.” Izuku snatched up his phone from the floor and sent a message to the group chat. “Done. Now we just hope they don’t need to use it.”

Hitoshi stared Spinner down and tried to think of his next move. He wasn’t allowed to activate his quirk yet, which meant that he had to actually *survive* long enough for the heroes to show up and give him permission to brainwash this idiot. That was going to be easier said than done, considering that his opponent had a sword and he had to rely on a sharp tongue and roguish good looks.

Also, Spinner had just threatened to kill him, obviously, just to keep it interesting. This day just kept getting better and better, didn’t it?

So, how was he going to get out of this without becoming a shishkabob? This guy was obviously obsessed with worthiness, so he might have some underlying ideology that hitoshi could take advantage of to keep him talking instead of fighting. He also needed to make sure that he did at least one weird thing to throw his opponent off and keep him from connecting the brainwashing to answering a question because he did *not* need the league of villains figuring out his quirk’s activation requirements. Ok. Easy as pie...hopefully.

Hitoshi kept smirking at Spinner as he shrugged, “I mean, there’s gotta be a more effective way of seeing if I’m a hero than stabbing me and seeing if I die. Like, what’s a true hero even like? Maybe we can come up with a better test?”

“All Might was the only true hero.” Spinner narrowed his eyes. “Are you saying we just come up with a *test* to see if you’re as worthy as the symbol of peace?”

HItoshi whistled lowly, “Whoah, that’s a tall order. I can’t say I’m *exactly* on All Might’s level, but hey, we’re bound to share some similarities, right? You’re the one holding the sword, so I guess it’s up to you to decide if I get close enough.”

He let out a breath of relief when Spinner gave a short nod. Ochako would probably be better at this than he was, considering that she was *literally* All Might’s successor, but she was busy right now, so Hitoshi was just gonna have to do it. Now he’d managed to turn the fight into a friendly chat, or about as friendly as it was going to get, so the next step was just to be as confusing as possible. He nodded in satisfaction and walked toward the fountain. He hung around his kidnappers for fun, he could manage a little chaos.

Spinner pulled his sword, “What are you doing?”

“Well, I figured if we’re going to have a serious discussion, we should probably sit down.” Hitoshi shrugged and put one foot into the water, “This seems like as good a place as any.”

Spinner blinked, his sword wavering as he watched Hitoshi pull his phone and wallet out of his pockets and put them on the side of the fountain, “...in the fountain?”

Hitoshi hummed an affirmation as he sat down, suppressing a shiver from the cold water as he looked up as Spinner, “Why not? All the cool kids are doing it! It helps get the brain juices flowing.”

Spinner hesitated for a moment longer, unsure if he was supposed to go along with it or just walk away before slowly sheathing his sword and joining Hitoshi in the fountain, “Very well. Tell me, young hero, how are you like All Might?”

“Well, let’s start with the fact that I want to save people.” Hitoshi leaned back, the water splashing slightly as he put his hands down to support himself. “What other qualities am I supposed to have? Let’s see if I match up.”

Extra Players

Chapter Summary

The mall conclusion

Chapter Notes

Too tired to link. Come back next chapter for art and memes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi waited tensely as Spinner thought up another question. So far, he'd been doing pretty well, but then again, he was also lying through his teeth to make himself seem more like All Might than he really was or even really wanted to be. He was really starting to get chilled from the water, but it was just a little longer until the heroes arrived and Spinner should be starting to go numb too, which might help him keep control longer...or might knock the villain out of his control immediately, but it was too late to do anything about that now, so Hitoshi was really hoping it was the first option.

Spinner cleared his throat, like he didn't have Hitoshi's full attention in the first place, and asked his next question, "Can you face down even terrifying situations without flinching? That's necessary if you wish to be like All Might."

Finally, a question he could actually answer truthfully, "Well, considering that I'm here talking to you instead of running away screaming, I think you have your answer."

Spinner's expression soured, "There's no reason to be rude about it."

"I'm sorry." Hitoshi flinched when his phone vibrated on the side of the fountain and the minute that Spinner looked away from him to think again, he checked it as discreetly as possible, smiling when he saw what Izuku had just dropped in the group chat. He quietly set his phone down and turned back to Spinner, "Actually, no I'm not."

Spinner froze, "What did you say?"

Hitoshi spoke a little louder, "I said, I'm not sorry for being rude, not that I was anyway. But considering that you're the one that barged in here on what was supposed to be a fun day for goofing off, I'd say I'm entitled to a little rudeness, don't you think?"

“No!” Spinner snarled, jumping up stiffly, “True heroes are never rude! All Might is never rude!”

He pulled out his Katana and charged, slightly stiff from the cold water, but Hitoshi was faster. He smirked and activated his quirk, making Spinner stop short and drop his katana in the water, “Well, that didn’t take long at all…”

Hitoshi frowned and trailed off. There was something weird about Spinner’s mind. He was fighting back and the cold water was making it harder to maintain his control, but Hitoshi had been expecting all that. No, what threw Hitoshi off enough to break his control was that Spinner’s brain felt exactly like Tokoyami’s. Well, more precisely, like Tokoyami’s *and* Dark Shadow’s.

Spinner shook his head as the brainwashing dissipated and grabbed his katana with a splash as he started stalking forward again, “You little fake, how dare you…”

Hitoshi wasn’t even listening, all he could do was scramble backwards in the fountain, soaking himself even more completely as he stared at Spinner in horror. He was supposed to be a lizard who could paralyze with blood. He didn’t have a sentient quirk like Tokoyami did, but...Hitoshi’s brain was spinning so fast he didn’t even think to phrase it as a question, “You’re not the only one inside your head!”

Spinner stopped, tilting his head in frustration, “What?”

Hitoshi opened his mouth to respond, but nothing came out. What was he supposed to say? He didn’t know what was going on either! Thankfully, though, he didn’t have to say anything, because that was when a bright red feather launched itself straight at Spinner, whose eyes widened as he barely had time to wing his Katana, slicing the feather in half. He shot one final look at Hitoshi, but his expression was a mis of so many emotions like frustration, confusion, and even fear, though that was probably wishful thinking on Hitoshi’s part, that it was hard to tell exactly what was going through his head. Hitoshi tensed, mentally preparing himself for another attack, but instead Spinner turned on his heel and dashed away.

“Get back here!” Hawks flew through the door like a bullet and made a beeline straight toward Spinner, but he had already disappeared through a spot of purple smoke on the floor. Hawks gave a disappointed snarl before turning to Hitoshi, “You hurt kid?”

Hitoshi shook his head and Hawks nodded in satisfaction before

taking off again and flying up to the second floor. The heroes were finally here, but more importantly, what the actual hell just happened?

The first thing Fumikage had done when he saw Shigaraki was turn off the lights. There was still sunlight and other brightness coming in from the hallway outside the store he'd been trying to help evacuate, just enough to keep Dark Shadow firmly in his control, but without the harsh artificial lights directly above him, he was free to order Dark Shadow to spread out and form a wall between the small crowd of civilians behind him and the dastardly villain up ahead.

"Leave here." Fumikage said, sounding a lot braver than he felt. "I will not allow you to hurt these innocent people."

Shigaraki scratched at his neck, "What makes you think...they're just a bunch of NPCs anyway, it's not like they're gonna drop any loot. I...stupid side quest. The party is supposed to communicate and clear things with the party leader…"

Fumikage watched suspiciously as Shigaraki paced back and forth, still scratching his neck and muttering unintelligibly. Finally, he stopped, his hand falling limp at his side, "Whatever, you're not high enough HP to be worth my time. I'm outta here."

He put out his hand and Fumikage hadn't had time to take more than one step forward by the time the outer wall collapsed into dust. Shigaraki gave a mocking salute and moved to jump out of the hole he'd just created when a portal appeared just a few feet away.

"Ah, young Tomura." Kurogiri said, materializing out from the portal, "I've been looking everywhere for you."

To his surprise, Shigaraki tensed, "Yeah, and?"

"And the heroes have arrived, so it is time to retreat for the time being." Kurogiri said. "We shall regroup and prepare our forces for another day."

Fumikage had to be imagining the way Shigaraki looked almost disappointed about that prospect, grabbing a bright red feather that had been flying toward them and disintegrating it to dust, "Fine, whatever. Let's just get out of here."

They disappeared into the portal and Hawks came flying in,

“Tokoyami! Are you alright?! I felt Shigaraki dust the feather I sent up here and…”

“I am alright.” Fumikage assured him. “The villain did not harm us.”

Hawks’ shoulders slumped in relief, “Thank god. Get these people out of here, I’m gonna make sure there’s no more villains.”

Tokoyam nodded as Hawks sped away, stopping for just a moment to stare at the wall Shigaraki had disintegrated instead of attacking them. Weren’t villains supposed to have a terrifying inner darkness? What had happened to his?

Shouta hated this. It was just like Shirakumo all over again. He and Mic ran as fast as they could, steps echoing on the pavement as they burst into the mall. He should have made Hitoshi stay home, he should have warned Nedzu about Todoroki’s link with the league immediately instead of researching it more. In hindsight it was obvious. Of course the league would attack a class outing where no teachers would be present! It was only logical! But no, he’d been blinded by his own hopes and had let his students, and his son, walk into a villain attack with no preparation and no back up. He was so stupid!

“He’s gonna be alright Shou.” Hizashi sounded like he was reassuring himself more than Shouta, but the effort was still appreciated. “Hitoshi can handle himself and he’s got the support gremlins to help him out, plus the rest of his class. He’ll be fine.”

Shouta nodded, but didn’t say anything. He could see a few of his other students talking to the police, but he could worry about them later. Right now, he just needed to find his kid. His eyes scanned what was left of the weekend shopping crowd until he caught a glimpse of purple hair. He almost didn’t realize it was hitoshi at first because his hair was darker than usual and hanging around his face in wet clumps rather than sticking straight up like it usually did, and the rest of him was equally soaked. It looked like Yaoyorozu had made him a blanket at some point, but he was still dripping onto the tiles and slightly shivering as Uraraka awkwardly rubbed his back.

Hizashi was the first to take off running, but Shouta was only half a step behind and he was pretty sure it looked like they’d both inherited Urarka’s teleportation ability because almost instantly, they were barreling into him and wrapping him in a hug. Hitoshi was ok. He was safe.

Hitoshi went tense for a short moment until he realized who it was, and then he immediately slumped over into the hug, “It’s been a long day.”

Hizashi gave a wet chuckle, “I bet kid, I bet.”

“Are you hurt anywhere?” Shouta asked. “How did you get so wet?”

“I, uh…kind of invaded the fountain?” Hitoshi grimaced. “And no, I'm not hurt. Just cold. Todoroki offered to warm me up with his fire, but…”

Shouta’s face went stony, “Right. I think this is all the proof we need.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: November 15, 2021 (MST)

Awkward

Chapter Summary

The day after the mall attack.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Sora
InS0mnIAc
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Memes!
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attack."

"Oof." Mic winced. "That's...wow…"

Hitoshi flopped over so he was on his side, "Yeah, and to make it even worse, we were playing around with my quirk and I pretty much forced her to tell me she has a crush on me."

Mic froze, "What?"

"It was an accident." Hitoshi groaned. "I know what you're thinking, I feel like a villain for doing it too, but like I said, we were just playing around with my quirk and I asked what I thought was a totally innocent question about Mina, but apparently Mina knows about her crush and it just came tumbling out. I didn't think I'd even be able to get her to answer!"

"Oh, Hitoshi." Mic came and sat on the couch beside him, carding his fingers through Hitoshi's hair and letting him put his head in his lap. "Quirk accidents *suck."*

Hitoshi nodded and rubbed his eyes, "Sorry. I was hoping I'd feel better after sleeping, but…"

"Yesterday was a lot." Mic pointed out. "It's ok to feel a little overwhelmed."

Hitoshi sighed, "Where's Aizawa?"

"He had another meeting with Nedzu." Mic said. "Their one yesterday got interuppted."

"Oh. right." HItoshi said numbly. "What's going to happen to Todoroki?"

"We're not sure yet." Mic said. "On the one hand, he's dangerous to have around, but on the other, knowing who the traitor is can give us a huge advantage if we can use that knowledge against the league. Honestly, we were hoping to get Cheat Code's opinion on this, so...well, your dad's gonna be home soon, so why don't we invite your friends over? We can bring them up to date on the Todoroki situation and you can test the waters with Uraraka and see how she's feeling about the whole thing. How does that sound?"

Hitoshi's face scrunched up, "Do I have to?"

Mic shrugged, “No.”

“Ugh.” Hitoshi groaned. “Fine, but if this goes south I’m volunteering to be a test subject for one of Mei’s explosions.”

Izuku bit his lip as he looked through the security footage again, “Mei-chan, you didn’t see anyone fitting Trapper’s description at the mall, did you?”

“What description, Izuk-kun?” Mei asked. “Nobody’s ever seen him.”

“Well yeah, but his quirk…” Izuku tried.

“Wasn’t used during the attack.” Mei finished. “The police and the heroes are looking for him too, you know. You don’t have to find him all by yourself.”

“I know.” Izuku frowned. “But if I’d just noticed Shigaraki earlier or pushed Nedzu to let the students fight…”

“Izu-kun, this isn’t healthy.” Mei sighed. “You helped keep people safe, you don’t have anything to make up for.”

“But…”

“No buts.” Mei slammed his computer closed. “Did you eat breakfast?”

Izuku blinked, “Uh…”

Mei rolled her eyes, “If you can’t remember, then we’re gonna assume it’s a no. Come on, let’s get a snack. I promise I’ll try not to explode your kitchen.”

Izuku swallowed and let Mei drag him by the arm into the kitchen. He supposed breakfast wasn’t a terrible idea…

Ochako was nervous. It had only been a day since their class’s nice normal trip to the mall had gone completely south, and that meant that the last twenty-four hours had been a whirlwind of police interviews, reassuring her parents, and teleporting away from the media. In the end, her anxiety basically came down to the fact that she hadn’t talked to Hitoshi since the attack, which was understandable considering that he hadn’t been doing that well when his adults had arrived to shuffle him off, but she still felt weird because maybe the fact that she’d accidently confessed she liked him

and he confessed back wasn't that important considering that an actual *villain attack* had happened less than a minute later, but it still kinda felt like something they should address eventually? Maybe she was just making a big deal out of it and it didn't even matter at all…

She groaned and flopped back into bed. Her bags for the training camp were half packed on the floor by her closet, but she didn't feel like doing that right now. Honestly, she didn't feel like doing a lot right now. How was she supposed to focus on anything with literally everything else that was going on?! Their class had just gotten attacked by villains and her crush was ghosting her! Even if he had an incredibly valid reason to do so, it was still ridiculously stressful! Why did this have to be her life?

Her phone vibrated beside her head and Ochako groaned and rolled over to see Mei calling her, "Hey Mei-chan. What's up?"

"Hitoshi's adults invited us to lunch!" Mei said. "Are you coming?"

Ochako shot up, "What? Uh, am I invited?"

"I think so." Mei replied absently. "Pretty sure Present Mic said he texted you too."

Ochako scrolled through her texts and groaned, "Yep. I was just too busy being depr...ok, yeah, uh, I'll text him back and say I'm coming. It's in...like ten minutes. Great. Wonderful."

"Well, It's not like you have to worry about driving time." Mei laughed.

Ochako looked down at her comfy pajamas with holes in the knee, "Yeah. That's not what I'm worried about."

Izuku was trapped in kind of a surreal situation. On the one hand, this was just Hitoshi's house and he knew, logically, that Hitoshi's parents were just normal people. Sure, they were pro heroes, but he talked to pro heroes all the time at school and it was no big deal! On the other hand, he was in Eraserhead and Present Mic's living room and they were offering him cookies. His inner fanboy was dying right now.

"Ochako said she was coming, right?" Hitoshi asked under his breath. "I really hope I didn't scare her off…"

"How would you have scared her off?" Mei asked, grabbing a cookie.

“She’s used to me and Izu-kun, so I’m pretty sure she’s got nerves of steel at this point!”

Htisohi blushed, but didn’t say anything as Mic and Aizawa sent him sympathetic looks. Izuku frowned and grabbed a cookie. He’d figure out what was going on when Ochako got here.

Speaking of Ochako, she popped into existence less than a minute later by the side of the couch, “Hi guys, sorry I’m late!”

Hitoshi’s face lit up briefly before he cleared his throat and looked away, “Uh, hey. Glad you could make it.”

“Perfect!” Mic grinned. “Everybody’s here! Lunch is already ready, so let’s eat!”

There was still an odd tenseness as they followed him into the kitchen, but then again, they had just been through a huge villain attack yesterday, so that might just be normal. The dishes at the table were all mismatched, like most of them had been bought as gag-gifts at the thrift store at some point, but Izuku supposed that Eraserhead and Present Mic were kind of mismatched too and they somehow made it work, so it was fitting that their house was the same way.

“Um, so are you feeling any better, Shindig?” Ochako asked as they sat down. “I was kinda worried about you after, you know, that whole thing at the mall?”

“Yeah...sorry.” Hitoshi grimaced. “I didn’t mean to fall off the face of the earth, but I came home and basically just crashed into bed. It’d already been a really long day before we even got to the mall.”

“That’s actually part of why we invited you kids over.” Aizawa cut in. “You’re all in on a few school secrets already, not to mention that you’re Hitoshi’s friends, so it’s only logical for us to inform you, especially you Midoriya, since you’re so skilled in analysis.”

Izuku and Mei exchanged a confused look and Izuku caught Ochako looking at Hitoshi with rapt curiosity until he sighed, “There’s a traitor in class 1A and I figured out who it is.”

Tomura was pissed. He was supposed to be the leader of the league! How had an attack, a *major* attack, happened without his approval? Not only that, but without him even knowing about it?! Kurogiri had given some bullshit answer about their *fearsome reputation* and made

the whole thing sound like it was Tomura's fault in the first place. How was he supposed to know he was gonna get spotted? He didn't even know 1A was going to be there in the first place! If this was anybody's fault, it was that good-for-nothing spy's for not informing them of 1A's location.

But no, as soon as word got to the league that he'd been spotted by the heroes, they were simply *following his lead.* It was ridiculous! If he was really the league's leader, he wouldn't be under All for One's thumb right now. He'd be free to do what he liked and actually make something of himself rather than obsess over destroying society in Sensei's name.

He wasn't the leader of the league, though. Not really. He was just some kid that All for One had picked up on the side of the road one day and decided would make a perfect puppet. And to make it worse, he didn't even have a main role anymore. He was constantly getting pushed to the sidelines by everyone and wasn't even the main character anymore. No, he was just some side character that everyone had apparently decided didn't have enough strength of character to win the game, but couldn't get rid of because their face was on the box. He hated the way the rest of the league was treating him!

And he hated that they were right.

A few days ago he would have argued that at least he still had his stream and Icy Cat, but there was no way Todoroki would ever talk to him again. Why would he want to when, from his perspective, Tomura had just betrayed him and then *lied about it.* Maybe if he hadn't assured Todoroki there wouldn't be an attack, then they'd be able to get through it, considering that he and Todoroki had a sort of silent understanding that he was a villain, and attacking heroes was just what villains did, but that wasn't what happened. No, he'd just had to open his big mouth and let Todoroki think everything was going to be fine before stabbing him in the back.

He hadn't been surprised when Todoroki had put out a message on their socials saying that he was going out of town for a bit and would miss the next few streams. Sure, he could have just been talking about the training camp, but at the same time...he hadn't said when he'd be back, or even if he was coming back at all. And the worst part was that Tomura couldn't blame him. He wouldn't want to come back either.

Izuku's frown got deeper and deeper as he listened to Hitoshi describe Todoroki's odd friendship with Shigaraki, "I'm sorry, but that makes absolutely zero sense."

"I mean, it kinda does?" Ochako said. "Kurogiri knew how my quirk worked, so he was obviously given inside information from *someone."*

Hitoshi shrugged, "I can show you some of the streams. It's definitely them, and I'm sure you saw them together in the security footage."

"Well, yeah, but it just seemed like he was trying to deescalate because he wasn't allowed to use his quirk." Mei argued. "Why in the world would he start gaming with a villain anyway?"

"The simple answer is teenage rebellion." Aizawa sighed. "He has good reason to hate his father and, quite honestly, if he's trying to piss off his dad, this would be a great way to do it."

"No, I got that, it's just…" Izuku groaned. "It doesn't make any sense for him to be the traitor...or at least, not the only one."

Mic blinked and Aizawa heaved a heavy sigh, "Do I even want to know what you're getting at?"

"Well, Mei, you know how I couldn't find any evidence of Trapper during the attack?"

"Yeah…?" Mei's eyes widened. "You think..."

Izuku nodded, "Every other known member of the league was there, but Trapper didn't even show his face? Why? *Because he'd be recognized."*

"You think Trapper is one of our students?" Mic asked. "Well, I mean, if it's Todoroki, then everything comes back full circle."

"But the quirks don't match." Izuku said. "Todoroki has ice and fire, but the evidence Trapper's left behind points to some sort of like an almost synthetic moss?"

"Which doesn't fit any of our classmates' quirks either." Uraraka huffed. "So now what?"

"Well, just because it doesn't match our class doesn't mean that it doesn't' match someone they know." Hitoshi said. "A parent, sibling, uncle, anyone they trust enough to tell about their day pretty much,

could be a potential information leak.”

“Or they could be intentionally doing something to hide their quirk.” Mei said. “There are tons of inventions that can change things, chemical reactions, all sorts of options if you’re desperate to hide who you are.”

“So…we’ve got a lead, but it’s thin.” Aizawa said. “So what if looking into their families dosn’t work out?”

“Well, then we’ve got a plan b.” Izuku smiled. “If all else fails, we already know one of the traitors. If we play our cards right, He’ll lead us straight to the Trapper without even knowing we’re onto him.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: November 22, 2021 (MST)

Camp

Chapter Summary

The summer training camp begins.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

The sun was barely starting to rise when class 1A trickled onto the bus to the training camp. There were a few subdued conversations here and there, but most people were too tired to make a whole lot of noise. Hitoshi knew *that* wouldn't last. He'd been on enough normal field trips to know that the bus was going to be absolute chaos by the time they actually got to wherever their destination was. Joy.

He wasn't really surprised when Kaminari sidled up to him, "Hey, uh, did you ever get around to checking out that stream that I recommended?"

Hitoshi glared at him tiredly, "A little warning would have been nice. You almost gave Aizawa a panic attack."

Kaminari winced, but immediately sent a quick glance over toward Todoroki, "So, uh…"

"We're dealing with it." Hitoshi grumbled. "Cheat Code's consulting, and we've got a plan, so just...keep doing what you've been doing. The heroes will get it figured out."

The quiet murmurs of the class went dead silent when Aizawa walked onto the bus and started glaring at them, "Good morning gremlins."

A pathetic chorus of *good mornings* and grumbles that were probably supposed to mean something like that echoed through the bus and Dad rolled his eyes, "I hope you can muster up a bit more enthusiasm for the actual training part of this camp, otherwise you're going to have a very hard time. But whatever, try not explode anyone's eardrums, don't stand up and, oh, right, all technology, including any cell phones and video game consoles, need to be turned off and put in here."

“What?!” Mina gripped her phone to her chest. “But…”

“It’s just for security reasons.” Aizawa said, handing the box to Iida to pass around. “Do I need to remind you that you were just attacked two days ago? We need to make sure the villains can’t hack your phones to find the camp’s location. Now get to work and if I hear of *anyone* bribing Yaoyorozu, I will expel you, understood?”

There was a louder chorus of grumbles this time, but all in all it only took about 15 minutes for everyone to turn in their phones and get on their way. Even though it was almost impossible that the league would attack twice so close together, there was still a chance the league would try to contact Todoroki during during the training came and considering that most of their time together was spent on gaming streams, they’d figured that if Shigaraki was going to reach out, he’d do it digitally. The plan was to leave all student phones at UA so they couldn’t be used to find the camp while also letting Nedzu keep a convenient eye on the devices if a text from Shigaraki happened to come through. The teachers, on the other hand, had been given three different backups to be able to contact the school, just in case.

Hitoshi had been expecting Todoroki to have more of a reaction to having his phone confiscated, but he was also stoic enough that it wasn’t too odd. The people who seemed most upset about the new phone rule were Mina and Kaminari, which checked out, and oddly enough, Mineta. Hitoshi wrinkled his nose in disgust. Maybe this was for the best. He really didn’t want to know what that grape stain had been planning on using his phone for during the camp.

The labs were cramped now that the entirety of class 1F was there with all their bags for the whole week. The labs were decently large, so it wouldn’t have been so bad if their tables hadn’t already been filled with all the fun new materials and projects they would be working on during the training camp. Izuku hovered by Mei’s table, moving their bags away whenever it seemed like something was about to explode. They’d made Eraserhead promise to let them know if anything bad happened, but Izuku had helped make the plan to keep 1A safe, so he just had to trust that Hitoshi and Ochako would be fine and focus on doing what he could to stop the league, which was perfecting his tracking program and finding Kurogiri.

The door to the lab opened behind them and Powerloader walked in, followed by David Shield and Melissa. Mei was too busy tinkering to notice, but Izuku’s face lit up when he saw them and they smiled

back, making Powerloader sigh when he noticed. This week was going to be so much fun, Izuku could already tell.

When they got to the front of the room, Powerloader turned around, “Class, I would like to introduce David Shield and his daughter Melissa. Both of them are inventors and support technicians on I-island and I encourage you to listen to their advice, you’ll learn a lot from them. Now, let’s get some basic logistics out of the way. How many of you have been wondering where you’ll be sleeping?”

The entire class raised their hands.

To Izuku’s surprise, Powerloader smiled, “There’s a tradition that happens every year during this workshop, meant to help spawn creativity and help all of you to think outside the box. UA is a big place and long story short, you’re allowed to sleep anywhere.”

That got Mei to look up, “Anywhere?”

Powerloader nodded, “Anywhere. Nedzu sometimes gives prizes for ingenuity. Just make sure you stay safe, if you’re somewhere you could fall, then you’ll have to either move or prove that you’re properly secured. That being said, setting up camp is your first task of the day, because we need the space in here to do the *actual* work of the week. We meet back here at noon, don’t be late!”

Izuku and Mei looked at eachother with matching grins. They were right, this week was going to be a blast.

As they filed off the bus, Hitoshi glanced over at Ochako. They’d been so busy planning for the training camp and figuring out what to do about Todoroki that he never actually got a chance to pull her aside and talk about what had happened at the mall and now they were going to be around all of their classmates for a whole week. Hitoshi sighed. He’d probably already missed his chance.

Aizawa had been talking to a couple of cat themed heroes and a kid that had gotten out a car shortly after they pulled up, but he turned back to the class before anyone had the chance to wander off, “Hello everyone, I’d like you introduce you to a few of the heroes you’ll be working with this week.”

The hero with brown hair started the official introduction, “Lock on with those sparking gazes!”

“Surprisingly cute and catlike!” The blond one added.

They finished together, “The Wild Wild Pusssycats!”

Hitoshi felt a chill run down his spine when Dad smiled, “They’re here to make sure you get whipped into shape. Lunch is at noon. That gives you about three hours. Good luck.”

“What do you…?” Kaminari had started backing back toward the bus when the ground started moving underneath them, “What the…?!”

They were swept off the cliff and Hitoshi scrambled to get ahold of *anything,* but nope. He really should have been suspicious when Dad told him to pack his capture weapon in his backpack and not his duffel. Most of the class was groaning when they reached the bottom, but Yaoyorozu immediately jumped into action, “Is anyone injured?”

There was a quick shuffling as everyone checked themselves over before they heard Mineta screaming and everyone looked over to see a giant monster looming over them. Ok, yeah, Aizawa was definitely planning on putting them through the wringer.

Tomura didn’t like the new recruits. If he still had any say in anything, he’d turn pretty much all of them away and call off this whole attack, but he wasn’t stupid enoguh to think that would do any good. The league had launched an entire attack without him, so why in the world would they stop one just because he said so?

The new batch was even worse than the ones he’d met before the mall attack though and about five times more annoying. Sure, Mustard, Magne, and Compress were kind of on par with Dabi and Toga, but Tomura still didn’t think they *needed* to be villains to accomplish their goals, especially not Mustard. All for One was probably ecstatic about his addition though. Kids were easier to manipulate.

The ones he really hated though were Muscular and Moonfish. There was no doubt that they were perfectly happy being villains considering that their goal was quite literally just to kill people, and maybe Tomura was being judgemental, but those didn’t seem like very worthwhile goals. They were selfish and shortsighted, like a druggie always looking for their next hit and in this case their drug of choice was other people’s suffering.

He’d locked himself in his room pretty soon after the *vanguard action squad* had shown up to prep for the big attack and had basically spent

the whole time playing video games by himself. Thankfully, he didn't have to participate in this one, he didn't even want to imagine how awkward that would be if he happened to run into Todoroki. Actually, it would still be hella awkward because he still streamed with the guy. Well, hopefully, if Todoroki ever decided to talk to him again. But whatever, he could handle playing video games alone if it meant that he didn't have to deal with bloodthirsty serial killers like Muscular and Moonfish.

Tomura froze, hardly noticing when an enemy killed his character as he came to a realization. *That* was who All for One wanted him to be. He wanted him to be just like Muscular and Moonfish: a tool that enjoyed bloodshed and murder just as much as those two did so that Sensei could just point Tomura in the direction of someone he wanted dead and they'd be dust before the end of the day. It was what he'd been going for ever since Tomura was a little kid and it was the same goal he had for Mustard, Toga...everyone in the league.

He couldn't stay here. He needed out. Asap. And if getting out meant throwing his dear Sensei under the bus, then that sounded even better.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: November 26, 2021 (MST)

This fic will update on Fridays moving forward!

Woods

Chapter Summary

The students arrive at camp.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku and Mei had ended up just stashing their bags in one of the many nest spots they'd made in the tunnels. Izuku threw his duffle bag down with a huff and turned to Mei, who was already dusting herself off to leave again, "I know you know we can find a more creative spot. We're not gonna win any extra points for this."

"Meh, that's what we have Extra-Credit-Kun for." Mei dismissed. "And this way we don't waste any more valuable lab time! I wanna see what fun toys Melissa-chan brought! Well, what are you waiting for?! Let's go!"

She grabbed Izuku's hand and started dragging him away, but both of them stopped short when they saw Melissa crawling toward them through the tunnels. She grinned and looked around as she dusted herself off, "This looks so cozy! I love what you've done with the place."

"Melissa?" Izuku gaped at her. "How did you get in here? It took us forever to figure out the entrances!"

Melissa giggled, "And it took me even longer. You forget that I've been visiting Uncle Might since I was a little girl. Nedzu usually invited Dad over for tea and I was free to explore. These tunnels are every nerdy kid's dream, seriously."

"Did you and your dad bring us any fun toys?!" Mei was bouncing up and down with excitement. "What did you bring me? Explosives? Trackers? Computer chips? I need toys for my babies!"

"Don't worry, I'm sure you'll be super happy with everything we brought you." Melissa said. "And we didn't forget about you Izuku. Turns out, the scientists Dad works with have been able to learn a lot

about the theory of relativity from the data you collected when Uraraka was jumping around I-Island and they've figured out some tweaks you can make to help get some more exact readings! I brought their research for you to read over, it's just waiting back in Powerloader's classroom."

Izuku's eyes widened and he grabbed Mei's hand, "Well, what are you waiting for? We're wasting valuable lab time, let's go!"

Hitoshi was grateful that Mei had insisted on him getting some muscle building training because otherwise he would have been completely useless against these literally brainless dirt monsters. He decapitated another one with a fallen branch and ran forward again, eyes darting around as he watched Ochako zip around helping everyone. If only he could get to the lady who was actually controlling these things and brainwash *her,* but they'd left her back with Aizawa and there was no way that he'd be able to climb all the way up that cliff again…

Hitoshi facepalmed, leaving a trail of dirt across his forehead. He was an idiot.

"Ochako!" He yelled. "I need you to get me to Dad!"

"What?" Ochako appeared right next to him. "Why?"

"I think one of those women he was with earlier is the one controlling the dirt." Hitoshi explained. "If she's still with him…"

"Then I can use Aizawa as an anchor and you can brainwash her." Ochako smiled brightly enough that Hitoshi's breath caught in his throat. "Shindig, that's brilliant! Are you ready?"

Hitoshi took a deep breath to steady himself, "As I'll ever be. Let's just get it over with."

The world's shortest and most intense roller coaster later, Hitoshi was kneeling outside a house he'd never seen before, Aizawa nowhere in sight. "Where are we? And more importantly, where are they?"

Ochako pointed at the building, "Up ahead, most likely just inside that building. I landed us a bit farther away just in case you needed a minute."

Hitoshi swallowed some bile and stood, "Good idea. They'll be expecting a teleportation attack, but this way, we can sneak up on

them. You get Dad and make sure he can't cancel my quirk, I'll focus on the Pussycats."

Ochako nodded once and followed Hitoshi as he silently made his way toward the house. They were almost there, crouching behind a bush near the front entrance, when Ochako suddenly tugged on his sleeve, "What are you...oh."

A little kid, the same one that had been with the Pussycats at the drop off point, was staring straight at him, mouth open wide as he saw them trying to sneak in. Hitoshi shot a panicked glance at Ochko, but she obviously didn't know what to do either, so he did the only thing he could think of.

He raised a finger to his lips and whispered, "Shhh…"

Instantly, the kid's expression fell into a hateful glare, "Auntie! Some of those hero brats got here early!"

"What would you do that for?" Ochako hissed. "You couldn't just…"

"You're just a bunch of stupid heroes." The kid spat. "Why would I ever help *you?"*

Hitoshi had been fiddling with his capture weapon, rearranging the parts that made it a voice changer and hoping he got this right because there was no way Aizawa was going to give him a second chance, "Auntie! Can't you make them leave?"

The kid's eyes widened and Hitoshi smirked behind his weapon as Ochako launched forward and shoved her hand over the kid's mouth. They froze as a pair of footsteps came running out of the front door, "No, I can't, don't be rude, Kouta."

Ochako released Kouta with a yelp when he bit hard on her hand, "That wasn't me…"

Hitoshi didn't let him finish before taking control, "Call off the dirt monsters."

The woman didn't move and Hitoshi glanced at Ochako who disappeared, only to be back a second later shaking her head, "We must have gotten the wrong one."

"Let her go!!!" Kouta launched himself at Hitoshi and started kicking and punching him so much that it took *all* of his concentration and

training to keep his control of whoever they had. He couldn't afford to let her go, though, not until they had the right one. "You let her go right now!"

A blond woman came rushing out of the house, "Kouta! What are you doing?!"

"He's got Autie!" Kouta had tears in her eyes and Hitoshi had to force down a twinge of guilt as Ochako cut in.

"He's not even touching her!" Ochako lied. "How could he *have* her?"

"Uh…" Hitohsi gave his best innocently confused smile. "Can I have a little help here?"

"Of course." Pixiebob moved forward to help, only to stop short as Hitoshi took control.

He spat out a mouthful of dust, "You better be the one with the dirt monsters. Call them off."

Ochako disappeared and reappeared with a relieved smile, "It worked."

Kouta glared at both of them, "This is all about that stupid training exercise, isn't it?"

"Yes. it is." Dad's voice echoed behind them and both Ochako and HItoshi jumped to their feet. "I knew you'd figure out that this was the most logical course of action eventually, but I honestly thought the execution would be cleaner."

Hitoshi winced, "Sorry. We got the wrong pussycat first."

Dad raised one eyebrow, "Yeah. I saw that. Now let them go."

"But if we let them go, the blond one will just make more dirt monsters." Ochako argued. "That would defeat the whole purpose of it in the first place."

"The kid needs to know his aunts are ok." Dad said gently. "You won the spar and Pixiebob will honor that, now let her go."

"Ok." Hitoshi let them out and they immediately went to go comfort the kid. "I'm sorry, Dad."

Dad just rolled his eyes and ruffled Hitoshi's ahir, "It's ok kid. We all

forget and go too far sometimes, the biggest thing is making sure you know your limits and the limits of people around you to make sure that doesn't happen. That's why intelligence gathering is so important."

Hioshi still kinda felt guilty about the whole thing, but was starting to feel a little better until the kid glared at him from underneath his aunt's arms, "You're nothing but a no good dirty rotten vilain!"

Mandalay gasped, "Kouta!"

Hitoshi shrunk in on himself. He could see Ochako starting forward, but before he could stop her, Aizawa put a hand on her shoulder. Hitoshi didn't think he'd seen him so pissed since he'd taken him away from his old foster parents, "Hitoshi, why don't you and Uraraka go help your classmates? I'm sure they need it."

Hitoshi took a deep breath. Distance and de-escalate, that was exactly what they needed. He grabbed Ochako by the arm, "Yeah, they're hopeless."

It was only when he saw Dad trying to hide a soft smile behind his capture weapon that he knew he hadn't done anything too wrong and everything was going to be ok.

Ochako waited until they were out of earshot in the woods to go off, "That little jerk! How dare he call you a villain like that?! You're a hero through and through and that brat deserves…"

Hitoshi cut her off, "I mean, we kinda did kidnap his aunts. I wasn't even thinking beyond the objective to realize how hard that might be for him to watch."

"Still…" Ochako huffed and ran her fingers through her hair. "You didn't deserve that, especially not after you did so well capturing both of them."

"Yeah, Mei and Izuku would be proud." Hitoshi joked. "The kidnapee grew up to be a kidnapper."

"Ah they grow up so fast." Ochako wiped a fake tear from her eye. "What would Mina say if we told her our first date was kidnapping people?"

Hitoshi choked on his next breath, "Our what?"

“I…” Ochako’s eyes went wide, “Oh my god, I’m so sorry, I was thinking out of context and then thought it’d be funny, because Mina would freak, but like, obviously this is a training exercise and not a date, like that’d be ridiculous. Not that I’d be opposed to a date, but you already knew that because I also accidently told you I had a crush on you. I…”

Hitoshi caught a hint of light swirling around her as she gathered her quirk to leave and he moved before he could think, reaching out to take her hand and act as her anchor, “I...um…”

Ochako looked at him, “Y-yes?”

Hitoshi’s mouth was dry, so he cursed internally as he found himself reverting back on his oldest coping mechanism and saying the snarkiest thing he could think of, “Do you really think I couldn’t plan a better first date than fighting *dirt monsters?* I’d pull out the actual monsters at least.”

There was a beat of silence before Ochako snorted, “oh yeah? What else?”

HItosh gulped, “Um...maybe a walk around the park? And some Mochi?”

His heart soared when Ochako smiled, “Ok then. It’s a date!”

Mic was going to blow his eardrums out when he heard about this.

Dabi looked out the window at the darkening sky and downed the rest of his drink, “Alright, let’s go.”

The rest of the league, except for Shigaraki who was holed up who knew where, nodded and stood, the only complaint coming from Muscular, “I’d much rather get straight to killing people than waste a whole day scoping things out.”

“Knowledge is power.” Compress reminded him. “If we don’t know the lay of the land, the heroes will strike back long before we even set eyes on our target.”

“Not to mention that the extra day will lure the heroes into a false sense of security.” Dabi added. “What with that and the mini attack on the mall the other day, they won’t suspect an attack until their students are already injured. They won’t stand a chance.”

“Are you ready?” Kurogiri asked, already opening a portal.

Dabi nodded and stepped through, waiting for everyone to get to the other side before turning to address the group, “Alright. Number one rule of tonight, don’t get seen. If you mess up, Trapper said they confiscated all the students cell phones, so make sure the kid doesn’t have a chance to run back to to camp and we should be good. Sensei’s using a quirk to track him, but his cover is still intact, so don’t expect him to say hi or answer your calls if you see him. Be back here by three am or you’re getting left behind.”

Izuku had spent the whole day looking over the research Melissa had brought him and checking it against his program. Thankfully he didn’t have to restructure his entire program, but the minor changes looked like they were going to make a big difference. He wished he could test it out by tracking Ochako, but he didn’t finish making tweaks until after dinner, and by that point she was apparently staying put, so he’d have to wait until she was training tomorrow to see if it worked. He’d also widened his search net, since none of the students knew exactly *where* the training camp was, so he wouldn’t even know where to look for her signature until he caught her teleporting.

“Alright kids, you have ten more minutes, then we’re kicking you out of the lab.” Powerloader yelled. “Taking breaks is important. You don’t have to sleep, but you do need to switch gears so you come back tomorrow with a fresh brain!”

Izuku smiled when he looked through the open door of his workroom and saw Mei doubling her pace, yelling orders at Melissa, who had been helping look over her project. She would have stayed in the lab all night if she could, but Izuku guessed that wasn’t that odd, since Powerloader said they had a curfew at this camp every single year. Support students must get hyper focused more than the other courses did.

He got a ping on his computer and frowned. Ochako should be resting too, not teleporting at this time of night. He opened the map and almost fell out of the chair. He knew what Ochako’s gravity signature looked like and this wasn’t it. No, even with the tweaks to his program, this signature was a little spread out. Not to the point where he couldn’t figure out where it was, but to the point where it looked cloudy, for lack of a better word. And he’d seen this signature before.

Izuku hurried to open the program on his laptop, making sure to

triple-check that the data was there and saved before running out of his room and dashing out into the hall toward Nedzu's office. The door opened just before he ran into it and Nedzu smiled at him, two cups already set out and ready.

"Hello Midoriya!" Nedzu chirped happily. "I apologize, the tea is still steeping. You ran here faster than expected, that training with Shinso must be paying off!"

"I have a location for Kurogiri." Izuku blurted.

Immediately, Nedzu's mood changed. He was still smiling, but it was more intense and the teacups got pushed to the side as he reached for Izuku's laptop, "Are you certain?"

"Not completely." Izuku admitted. "But the gravity signature I'm picking up matches what I've theorized about the way his quirk works. My only question is what they're doing in the middle of nowhere. I would have thought their hideout would be in a city, close to the action where they could easily get info and not have to rely too much on warping to get everywhere, but they're nowhere near anything."

"Hmm...interesting." Nedzu glanced down at the map and froze, his hair standing slightly on end. "Midoriya, you're absolutely certain this isn't Urarka's warping, correct?"

"Yeah, hers doesn't look like that." Izuku nodded. "It's more like a lightning strike, not a cloud."

"Very well, then." nedzu nodded. "Do you mind if I hold onto this until tomorrow? I do believe that your class's current assignment is to take a mental break."

"Um, sure." Izuku narrowed his eyes. "Is something wrong?"

"That remains to be seen." Nedzu said. "But if so, we have a team of heroes ready to help and you're right here in case we need your expertise. Don't you worry, I know what I'm doing, young Midoriya."

"O-ok." Izuku frowned. "I'll try."

Nedzu smiled softly, "That's all I ask. Sleep well and thank you for bringing this to our attention. Have a great night, Midoriya."

Izuku nodded and walked away. It was going to be a weird night.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: December 3, 2021 (MST)

Defense

Chapter Summary

The heroes make a decision

Chapter Notes

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi didn't tend to sleep well in new places, but today was the exception. He was exhausted from the fight with the pussycats, had a stomach full of good food and his crush had agreed to go on a date with him. It was like the perfect recipe for a good night's sleep.

Until his adults ruined it completely.

"Wakey Wakey little listeners!" Loud Dad screamed. "Everybody pack up!"

Hitoshi jolted out of a deep sleep and looked around at his classmates, who were in a similar state. Todoroki was blinking slowly, while Mineta looked almost enraged at being woken up and Kaminari just looked absolutely bewildered, "What's going on?"

"Training." Dad answered shortly, picking up Kirishima's half empty backpack from the floor and throwing it at him. "Get everything packed up. In heroics, you never know when the next fight is going to happen and you have to be ready to get going at the drop of a hat. Bus leaves in five mintues, and you all better be on it when it does."

His adults left and everyone exchanged confused looks for half a second before the room erupted into a flurry of movement as everyone scrambled to grab everything and stuff it in their bags as quickly as possible.

Hitoshi groaned and flopped back onto the floor, "I'm revoking their parental privileges."

Izuku tried to sleep, but didn't do a very good job. Nedzu still had his laptop, and his other computers were locked up in the lap alongside

mei's inventions. He'd just expected Nedzu to be more excited and less worried and it was giving him anxiety. Was there something special out in that part of the woods? Was he accidentally stumbling across yet another state secret that he wasn't supposed to know? It was frustrating, but Mei was more than happy to ramble and distract him and that was how they tried to fall asleep.

They'd added their sleeping bags onto a giant nest of all the blankets they'd found around the tunnels and had basically buried themselves in an attempt to battle the anxiety and boredom that came with not being able to work on their projects. His mom would probably be concerned that he wasn't worried about sleeping basically right next to a girl like other boys his age would have been, and Powerloader probably didn't want them sleeping in the same space either, but having Mei right there was comforting. It felt like home in a way that even his house didn't. He was still worried and bored out of his mind, but at least he wasn't alone. He'd have to get some games from Nedzu tomorrow and stash them up here so they didn't have this problem the whole week.

Mei nudged his arm, "Are you getting lost in your own head again? You said that Nedzu's taking care of that ping, so don't worry so much about it. I can tell you more about my babies, if you want?"

"I didn't even know you were up." Izuku groaned and stretched. "What time is it?"

"Just past six am." Mei said, sitting up. "The labs unlock at seven at the earliest, so do you wanna just head down there and wait?"

Izuku nodded and they pulled on their work clothes before making their way to the nearest exit and dropping down into the halls of UA. They weren't in any rush, since there was no way Powerloader had unlocked the labs yet, so they were just kinda wandering in the right general direction when they heard a commotion down the hall and turned to see the entirety of the first year hero course coming toward them.

They all looked exhausted. Everyone was still in their pajamas and most of them were bleary eyed and dragging their feet as they made their way down the hall. Izuku glanced over at Mei, who shrugged, so he just turned back to the hero course and started looking for Hitoshi and Ochako.

"Go put your stuff in the classroom." Aizawa instructed. "Then meet in

the cafeteria. Lunch Rush should have breakfast ready pretty soon anyway."

Mei facepalmed, "Oh right, breakfast!"

"Oh yeah." Izuku blushed. "I forgot about that too."

By this point, Hitoshi and Ochako had made their way over and Hitoshi groaned as he dumped his duffel bag on the floor, "I hate my adults. Can you two kidnap me again?"

"What even happened?" Izuku asked. "I thought you were in an undisclosed location?"

"We *were.* " Ochako whined. "We were just in the woods somewhere until the teachers all came in at way too early in the morning and forced us onto the bus. I thought we were only supposed to have, like, three heroes there, but they had a whole crowd of them to be taskmasters if we weren't moving fast enough. Ugh, and that was *after* having to fight our way to camp in the first place."

Izuku froze, "You were in the woods? Just...in the middle of nowhere?"

HItoshi frowned, "Yeah. Does that mean something to you?"

Izuku shared a look with Mei, "Uh...no reason. Glad you're ok!"

"Ok…?" Hitoshi looked at him skeptically. "You guys forgot to eat breakfast, didn't you?"

"Inventing is more important." Mei insisted. "But the labs are still closed so onward to the cafeteria!"

Ochako rolled her eyes and fell into step beside them, "How has inventing been?"

"Um...I got my program to work." Izuku shrugged.

"Oh?" HItoshi asked. "Congrats."

"Yeah…" Izuku looked forward. "I think I might have already stopped an attack."

Mineta was seething. So far he'd been able to pass it off as waking up on the wrong side of the bed and being grumpy from lack of sleep just

like everyone else but if things kept going wrong, he might not be able to keep that up. He couldn't imagine how things could have gone more wrong. First the mall attack, then the teachers moving the camp and all the hero reinforcements that had come with that. They had known about the attack somehow and considering how Midoriya and Hatsume were the first ones to greet them, Mineta was betting that it was all Cheat Code's fault. He needed to get his hands on Shinso and soon. See how they reacted to having their precious little extra credit project fall into the hands of the villains.

"Alright kiddos!" Present Mic yelled over the crowd. "So yesterday you guys were training your quirks with the Pussycats, right? Well we're gonna get you whipped into shape real quick right here at UA! It may not be as pretty as the woods, but you're gonna be doing the same things here as you would have there, ya dig? Oh, and Todoroki, Eraserhead wants to talk to you real quick in Nedzu's office. Let's go!"

Hitoshi was almost completely certain that Izuku knew why the camp location had changed, but for some reason, he didn't want to tell anybody yet. That was fine, he'd probably hear all about it tonight anyway. It tended to be like that, even when Mei and Izuku were *supposed* to keep information confidential, he ended up in the know anyway, so he could be patient. He just hoped that the *attack* that Izuku had mentioned wasn't on them. Oh, who was he kidding, they were the problem class, of course it was.

But then who had tried attacking them? The league had just attacked a few days ago, so there was no way they'd be able to mobilize again this quickly, right?

He sighed as Mina came bounding up to him, "Hey Mina, how are you?"

"Running on caffeine and sugar!" Mina said cheerfully. "Mandalay said we're supposed to help you with your quirk on our breaks!"

Hitoshi nodded as he felt his quirk connect and pulled a small notebook out of his pocket, "Write down some questions you're ok with me asking. Oh, and before you start scheming, I already know Ochako likes me and I'm taking her out next week, so don't bother putting those questions down."

The squealing was so loud that Hitoshi almost lost hold of his quirk. It was gonna be a long day.

Aizawa glared at Todoroki's phone as it started vibrating again, "Shigaraki again?"

"Yes." Nedzu hummed. "He's been calling and texting quite frequently since we evacuated the camp, most likely as a result of said evacuation. Unfortunately, none of the texts have had any relevant information to the attack. Most of them simply tell him to call or have a...colorful variety of insults. It's quite entertaining, even if it is highly concerning and incriminating."

"He doesn't know we're onto him though." Tsukauchi said quietly. "So he won't be prepared for my quirk. That's a silver lining at least."

Nedzu suddenly pressed a button and the door swung open to reveal Todoroki, his hand raised to knock, "Hello. I was told you wanted to see me?"

"Ah yes, young Todoroki." Nedzu said pleasantly. "You're right on time, come sit down."

Todoroki glanced around suspiciously as he entered the room and the door closed behind him with a click as he sat down, "What is this about?"

Nedzu set his phone on the table in front of him, "Would you care to explain why Tomura Shigaraki, excuse me, *Dusty,* has been calling you nonstop for the past four hours?"

Todoroki stared at the phone on the table, "I...I don't know. He doesn't usually call me."

Tsukauchi blinked in surprise and nodded. Shouta frowned in confusion. So Todoroki was telling the truth, but that meant that he didn't know why the camp had changed locations, which just didn't make sense considering he's the one who told the league their location in the first place.

"So you did not know that the league planned to attack our training camp last night?" Nedzu asked. "I find that hard to believe."

"The league was going to attack?!" Todoroki said. "Ok, so I guess you already know about the streams, and I know you probably won't believe me, but we never talk about hero and villain stuff. I would never give him information on the camp."

Tsukauchi confirmed that he was telling the truth and Shouta

groaned, “So Cheat Code was right about there being two traitors.”

“I’m not a traitor.” Todoroki shook his head, “I promise you, I haven’t been giving out any information.”

Nedzu hummed, “Then why does he keep calling you?”

“I don’t know.” The phone on the desk started vibrating again and Shouto reached toward it with determination and put it on speaker. “But I can find out.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: December 10, 2021 (MST)

Traitor

Chapter Summary

Todoroki and Shigaraki have a chat.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I want out.”

Shouto froze for a brief moment before answering, “Out of the stream?

“No you idiot.” Shigaraki hissed. “Out of the league!”

“O-oh.” Shouto blue screened. “Is that why you’ve been calling me nonstop?”

He could practically hear Shigaraki rolling his yes, “I’ve been calling you nonstop because you wouldn’t answer, you stupid noob!”

“They confiscated my phone!” Shouto defended. “I’m sorry!”

“Whatever.” Shigaraki grumbled. “So what? Can’t you talk to your stupid pro-hero teachers and work out some deal or something?”

“Uh…” Shouto glanced between Nedzu and Aizawa, “They’re already here, actually. They thought I was the traitor, especially since you kept calling me...”

“Well, ask them if they want info!” Shigaraki said. “There’s gonna be an attack on your stupid camp tomorrow, tell them that.”

“We already know that.” Aizawa cut in. “Cheat Code informed us last night and we’ve moved the students to a more secure location.”

“Well if you brought Trapper too, then that’s not gonna help you.” Shigaraki said. “Sensei’s using him to track your stupid class. Oh, and hi Eraserhead. I love your fighting style.”

“I will try to take that as a compliment, considering that you’ve tried to kill me.” Aizawa said dryly. “What else can you tell us?”

There was a long moment of silence, “Not over the phone. I dunno everything that All for One is tracking, but there’s a good chance he’ll find out about this burner. If he finds out I’m leaving...well, we’d have to discontinue the stream if I died and I don’t wanna disappoint our fans.”

Shouta rolled his eyes, “I think we’d have bigger problems in that case.”

“Yeah.” Shigaraki sounded like he was smiling. “Probably.”

Nedzu and Aizawa turned to the cop, who looked shocked, “He’s telling the truth. He really wants to leave the league.”

“Of course I fucking do.” Shigaraki spat. “Are you guys idiots? Sensei’s a manipulative bastard and I just want to have a normal life, is that too much to ask?”

“Not at all.” Nedzu said, a gleam in his eyes. “When can you get here?”

“Just give me a couple minutes to pack up my gaming consoles and I’ll be there in an hour.” Shigaraki said, then promptly hung up.

Shouto sighed, “He’ll be here tonight. He’s seriously underestimating the number of gaming consoles he needs to pack.”

Hitoshi didn’t think he’d ever get used to brainwashing Tokoyami. Being able to feel two people with one brainwash was just so strange that Hitoshi was left thinking about it even after the day’s training was over. The sensation was eerily similar to what he’d felt inside Spinner’s head and it was freaking him out.

He dropped his quirk and rubbed his head, “Hey Tokoyami, you mind if I ask you a question?”

“You have asked me many questions already.” Tokoyami’s voice was laced with amusement. “But yes, go ahead.”

HItoshi chuckled, “I was just wondering what it was like when Dark Shadow manifested.”

“Strange.” Tokoyami sat down and invited Hitoshi to sit down next to him. “I suddenly was not as alone as I had been, which was both an asset and a terrifying curse. It took a few years before I truly saw Dark

Shadow as my companion and not some interloper, truthfully."

"But you knew Dark Shadow was there, right?" Hitoshi asked. "It didn't hide from you at first, did it?"

Tokoyami blinked, "It is a part of me, so until it became tangible for the first time, I suppose it could have been there longer than I was aware of it."

"I guess that makes things simpler." Hitoshi muttered. "Thanks for the help. You can let whoever else needs a break know that I'm free if they want."

Tokoyami nodded and walked away. Hitoshi groaned. Why couldn't brains be simpler?

"Listen up you gremlins!" Powerloader yelled. "I have an announcement to make and it's only gonna take a few minutes, then you can get back to your projects, alright?"

Everyone mostly set aside their projects and Izuku stood by the doorway of his workroom. He shared a look with Mei. Did this have something to do with why the hero students had had to come back to UA so quickly?

As soon as he had everyone's attention again, Powerloader started talking again, "If you hadn't noticed, some last minute changes mean that the hero students are doing the rest of their camp here at UA, same as you. Well, tonight, they're going to have a test of courage and I think this will be a great opportunity to test your inventions against an actual audience. Remember, the goal is to scare them, not hurt them, but you've got a little bit to prep something, so go, have fun and do what some of you already do best: terrorize the hero students."

Izuku blinked. Ok, so that definitely had *something* to do with the ping he'd gotten last night, but...that didn't mean he and Mei couldn't still have fun with it.

"I wonder what babies I should use?" Mei mused. "I could make spider babies!"

"We only have a couple hours." Izuku pointed out. " I think the point is to find new uses for our current projects."

Mei pouted, "Well, my current projects are all being used by the

heroes!”

“What about Uraraka’s earrings?” Melissa wandered over. “She doesn’t seem to need them anymore, so is there a way we can use that technology to give us an edge?”

“The gravity shifting, not so much…” Mei muttered. “But the tracking will be fun! We can each pick a student and just keep scaring them over and over and over again no matter where they go! And I can make them look like spiders!”

“So do you need me to go get Uraraka’s earrings, or…?” Izuku smiled as Mei grinned.

“Nah, they matched her outfit today and I got the blueprints. They’re just little trackers, and I can make them look like spiders and scare everyone!” She lowered her goggles over her face and grabbed a blowtorch. “I’ll be done in no time!”

Tomura pulled the hood more securely over his face and gripped his two massive duffel bags tightly in either hand. He almost looked like a terrorist walking up to the gates of UA, but thankfully Todoroki’s stupid cat ruined that illusion. The stupid thing had been hanging around more frequently and as soon as she’d seen him leave with his bags, she’d immediately launched herself onto his shoulders and refused to leave. She hadn’t stopped purring the entire time either, like she was gloating about something and rubbing it in. No wonder Icy Cat liked her so much.

He’d managed to sneak away without Kurogiri seeing him and All for One hadn’t tried to follow him yet, so it was worth it. It had taken him a little longer than he’d planned to pack everything up and get out, but now that he was out...he was almost free. As soon as he got inside UA, he’d never have to go back to the league again.

He carefully set one of his bags on the ground and rang the intercom. There was a few moments of silence before that dumb rat answered, “Hello! We’ve been expecting you! Todoroki will meet you at the gates and take you where you need to go. If you leave his side, my teachers are prepared to swarm you.”

“Noted.” Tomura rolled his eyes. “I’m turning myself in, I get what happens if I step out of line.”

“Good!” Nedzu chirped. “Then Todoroki should be right there to pick

you up! I look forward to meeting you, Tomura Shigaraki."

Tomura picked his duffel bag back up and waited for a long moment before Todoroki came into view, "Took you long enough, you filthy casual."

"You can't say that to me, you noob." Tomura huffed. "So, uh...can i come in."

Todoroki nodded and gestured for him to follow, "Yeah. Everyone's waiting for you."

Tomura gulped and stepped into UA.

"Todoroki never came back." Mina pointed out.

"Oh, I guess not." Ochako said evasively. It probably wasn't the best idea to tell everyone that he was likely being interrogated by the cops because of associations with the league. "Do you think we'll get a break tonight? I'm exhausted."

"I doubt it." Jiro groaned. "Aizawa's acting like a slave master! Waking us up in the middle of the night? It's sadistic."

"But we have to be doing *something."* Tsu pointed out. "The teachers have planned this whole thing out, so whatever we do, it will probably have a reason."

"You're exactly right!" Pixiebob popped up behind them and Ochako jumped, instinctively teleporting across the room. "Whoa! You really *are* a fast one, aren't you."

Ochako blushed and teleported back, "Sorry, you startled me."

Pixiebob laughed, "Well you better get used to it! Tonight, you're gonna be trying to scare the pants off each other! It's not nearly as spooky as the middle of the woods, but it's up to you to make it as haunted as possible. What's the point of a test of courage unless it's actually challenging?"

"Test of courage?!" Mina grinned. "That sounds amazing!"

"Yep!" Pixiebob said. "And everyone gets to participate! We *were* gonna make the ones who failed sit out, but Aizawa and Vald are going to be...well, they're kinda busy, so everyone gets to come!"

Mina jumped up, hands in the air, “Yes!!!”

Jiro looked at pixiebob suspiciously, “Why change the plans? Were Aizawa and Vlad not supposed to be busy?”

“Oh, don’t worry about it.” Pixiebob dismissed. “Your teachers are working it out now and whatever it was is pretty much over now, anyway. It’ll be fine. It starts in half an hour outside the cafeteria!”

Ochako frowned, but didn’t have any time to argue with Pixiebob before she was off to tell the next group about tonight, “Well, at least the test of courage sounds fun?”

“Yeah, it will.” Jiro said. “Just don’t let Aizawa hear you say that.”

“Oh, he’s busy, don’t worry.” Mina waved her away. “This is gonna be a blast!”

Mineta was a fairly smart individual, but right now he felt like a total idiot. He’d only seen it out of the corner of his eye and at first, he thought his brain must have been playing tricks on him, but unfortunately, no. A very poorly disguised Tomura Shigaraki was walking alongside Todoroki and Mineta hadn’t even known they‘d started hanging out. The alarms hadn’t started going off yet, which meant that there was only one possibility: Shigaraki had turned traitor.

Screw going to the test of courage, Mineta needed a phone. Now.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: December 17, 2021 (MST)

Power

Chapter Summary

The test of courage begins.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shigaraki didn't waste any time getting to the point, "I want house arrest and witness protection."

The cat on his shoulder meowed in agreement, following that up with a threatening hiss in Nedzu's direction.

"Witness protection we can guarantee." Nedzu said calmly. "House arrest depends on your information. You've killed a lot of people."

Shigaraki groaned, "I know that! And for the record, I know it might not be possible, but All for One picked me up when I was five years old and wandering the streets. Is it too much to ask for a second chance at a normal life?"

"His Sensei raised him to be a killer." Shouto cut in. "He was groomed to be the next incarnation of the man who took him in, so it wasn't something he chose."

"Which is something we'll keep in mind when considering his sentence." Tsukauchi said. "But that depends on what information he can give us."

"How about the identity of your mole, Trapper?" Shigaraki offered. "I bet you never thought to look past MInrou Mineta's little act to see what he was *really* hiding. I can tell you pretty much everything he's passed along so far. Is that good enough?"

Nedzu and Tsukauchi exchanged a glance, "It's a start."

"Has anyone seen Mineta?" Mandalay asked, passing out the students phones as a precaution so that they could contact the teachers in case

anything happened during the exercise. “I keep reaching out to tell him it’s time to begin, but I can’t find him anywhere!”

“Let’s just start without him.” Tiger said sternly. “There’s no reason for the rest of the students to miss out just because he wasn’t responsible enough to show up on time.”

Mandalay sighed, “I guess you’re right. Alright kids, listen up! You’re going to take turns scaring and being tested.”

“Class 1B will be the scareers this first round and Class 1A will have to endure!” Pixiebob took over. “Class 1A, you’ll be split into groups of two! Your goal is to get a piece of paper from Ragdoll at the other end of the school and bring it back here. Class 1B, you may divide however you like, but your goal is to scare your classmates out of their pants!”

“That’s it?” Monoma laughed, “Oh, this will be a piece of cake!”

“I dunno.” Tiger said vaguely. “They might just surprise you. Also, we convinced the support course to help out and they’ll be working to scare both groups too, so there might be a few more surprises waiting for you!”

Bakugo grumbled, “I swear to god, if it’s glitter again…”

“Alright!” Pixiebob interrupted. “Scarers, get out of here. The rest of you, let’s draw lots to find out your pairs!”

Izuku and Mei had set up camp in Izuku’s workroom, his big computer already linked to the camera feeds so they could see all the students. The little spider trackers that Mei had made were hanging out in little groups throughout the school, but most of them were hanging around the beginning, ready to latch onto the students without them even knowing, their camera feeds taking up the third screen. Izuku and Melissa had both told her that adding cameras to the spider bots was redundant, but she’d thrown them in anyway, so they might as well have the feed pulled up, even if they weren’t going to use it.

The Pussycats were still giving instructions, so they were just stuck in that awkward waiting phase between action and anxiety that Izuku hated. It didn’t help that he was kind of freaking out about other things too. Hitoshi and Ochako seemed closer somehow than they did before, and he’d overheard one of the other hero students say that Hitoshi had asked her out. Did that mean they were dating now, just

like everyone thought Izuku and Mei were dating?

What did it really mean to date anyway? It was supposed to happen when someone liked someone else, right? Or at least liked them more than other people. Maybe that wasn't quite right? Izuku's mouth fell open in a quiet *oh.* Maybe it wasn't that he was supposed to like Mei *more,* but that he liked her differently than everyone else. And *that* was true. Izuku liked Hitoshi and Ochako, obviously, but they didn't hold the same place as Mei. She was his partner in crime and he didn't think anyone could ever even come close to replacing her as that. Was that what liking somebody meant?

"Ok, I can see you overthinking from here." Mei poked him in the side. "What's on your mind, Izu-kun."

Izuku hemmed and hawed for a moment, "I, uh, think I might like you."

Mei rolled her eyes, "I like you too, Izu-kun. You wouldn't be my best friend if I didn't…"

"That's not what I meant." Izuku mumbled. "I meant I think I might like you romantically."

Mei's eyes widened, "I don't think I heard that right, Izu-kun, could you speak up?"

"Romantically." Izuku blurted, blushing now. "I think I might like you romantically. I mean, maybe? I know you're really important to me and I can't imagine my life without you, but like, it's more than that, you know? It's that I want you by my side as my partner for the rest of...well, I mean we're still young, so things might change, but at least for now and…"

The crosshairs in Mei's eyes narrowed as she zoomed in on his face, "Really? You...you're not lying?"

Izuku shook his head, "I know neither of us are really used to people actually *liking* us, especially not in that way, but...I dunno, people already think we're dating and I guess...well, I'm not opposed to that maybe being the truth?"

Mei grinned and grabbed his hand, "It would definitely be a lot more fun!"

Izuku chuckled awkwardly and squeezed her hand, "So does this mean

you're my girlfriend now?"

"Mhhm!" Mei nodded. "And you're my boyfriend, because I feel the same way. I never want to lose you. Ever. You're stuck with me and my babies forever. Got it?"

Izuku smiled widely, "That sounds absolutely perfect."

"Good." Mei nodded in satisfaction before turning to the screens, "Oooh! They're starting!"

Ochako watched Kouta out of the corner of her eye as he glared at her classmates. He really seemed to hate heroes and she wasn't quite sure why, but from the way he'd reacted when Hitoshi had brainwashed the pussycats, it probably had something to do with heroes putting themselves in danger all the time and that just made her feel worse about the whole thing. Maybe she could find some way to make it up to him, but at the same time, he'd probably prefer it if she never talked to him again, so she just didn't know what to do. This was one of those things where she couldn't just ask Izuku and Mei for advice because both of them were even more useless in social situations than she and Hitoshi were and Mina tended to be a little bit too pushy, which definitely wouldn't go over well.

"He'll be fine, don't worry." Mandalay said softly. "He...well, his parents were heroes and he blames them for leaving him behind. Seeing us in danger just brought back bad memories is all, but he's a strong boy and we're here to help him. Assuming he accepts our help."

"I'm sorry." Ochako muttered.

Mandalay gave her a sad smile, "You didn't know. He'll understand one day. It's just hard for a little boy when everyone seems to celebrate his parents death, just because they died as heroes."

She patted Ochako's shoulder and sighed, "Well, it's time for you and Asui to get going! Don't let that other class scare you *too* badly, alright?"

Ochako smiled and popped her knuckles, "Oh don't worry. I think I've got it covered."

Mineta weaved his way through the tunnels and made his way up from the basement. While the rest of his class was busy doing that

stupid test of courage, he was busy visiting every single backup generator and busting it by pouring sugar inside that he'd stolen from teh kitchens. Now, when he cut the power, the generators would fail just as quickly and the doors would be wide open for the league. Now, he could find all the power switches, but that would take time that he didn't have if Shigaraki was already spilling his guts.

Finding Kaminari was *so* much simpler.

He kept to the tunnels until he saw a shock of yellow and black hair through the vents, then went a little farther and popped out into the hall. He made sure the door was closed before running to catch up, "Hey! Kaminari! Wait up!"

"Mineta!" Kaminari grinned. "You made it!"

"Yeah!" Mineta lied. "The pussycats told me to just run ahead and join your group."

"Well then, be looking out for 1B." Kirishima said. "They're supposed to pop out and scare us at any second."

"Well then maybe we should scare them first." Mineta turned to Kaminari. "Why don't you show them what you can really do?"

Kaminari frowned, "What are you talking about?"

"Blow out the power." Mineta shrugged. "It'll be dark so we can scare all of them and it'll set the mood. Plus, Kirishima's strong enought o take care of you and you're oging to be impossible to scare if you're dumb."

"I don't know whether to be offended or impressed, dude." Kaminari whistled. "That's really smart."

Mineta seethed internally, "Thanks man."

"But um, won't we get in trouble?" Kirishima asked. "I mean, blowing out the power is kinda a big deal."

"Nah, there's backup generators and they can always just reset the system." Kaminari insisted, walking toward the nearest plug. "This is gonna be eipic."

He took out a paper clip and jammed it in the socket, sparking as he maxxed out his power output. The lights flickered once and then went

out.

“Um...it’s really dark.” Kirishima fretted. “Aren’t the emergency generators supposed to kick on or something.”

Mineta didn’t answer. He just chuckled silently to himself as he used the sudden darkness to steal Kaminari’s phone and slip away.

Hitoshi wasn’t sure that having all the lights go out at once had been the original plan, but he thought it was a nice touch. It definitely made the place more spooky, but he was pretty sure that at least some of the lights were supposed to stay on in case of an emergency. He’d been partnered with Ojiro, who looked like he had a very *fight* response when it came to fight or flight, so they would probably be alright. Class 1B sounded like they had some creepy quirks from what he'd heard from Izuku’s ramblings when he was working on their analysis packets. But Izuku’s analysis could make anyone's quirk sound terrifying, so yeah, hopefully the students they ran into were still working on implementing Izuku’s advice and hadn’t quite leveled their quiks up to eldritch horrors quite yet.

“Ugh.” Ojiro groaned behind him and HItoshi turned around. “My tail’s caught on one of Mineta’s gross little balls. Pretty sure he lost his head the second things got scary and just tossed his balls everywhere in a panic.”

“Yeah.” Hitoshi laughed, then froze. “Wait a minute. Mineta wasn’t a part of the exercise.”

Ojiro stopped pulling, “What?”

“Mineta wasn’t part of the exercise.” Hitoshi repeated. “He didn’t show up, remember? So *he shouldn't be here.* ”

Ojiro frowned, “What are you…”

Hitoshi saw something moving through the shadows and lunged to tackle Ojiro out of the way, but before he could a storm of purple balls flew out from the shadows. He managed to dodge most of them, but he took a step back and stepped on one, anchoring his foot to the floor. Hitoshi immediately took off his shoe, but that meant he wasn’t looking when the next volley of balls came and stuck themselves all over his clothes. He tried tearing off his shirt, but the balls stuck to each other and to his hands, so all he managed was to get himself even more trapped. A shape dashed out of the shadows and Mineta

punched him in the back of the knees, forcing him down to the floor and sticking him even more completely.

Hitoshi stared at Mineta in shock, “Since when are you actually good at fighting?!”

“Since I got here.” Mineta snapped. “But you, like everyone else my whole life, were too busy underestimating me to even notice, just like you never noticed I was working for the villains.” He turned his attention to Ojiro. “And yet, everyone *loves* you tail boy. But what about without it, huh? How will you fight now.”

Ojiro tensed and raised his arms, “I’ve still got four limbs, you traitor. What did you do?”

“I cut the power.” Mineta said. “And poured sugar in the emergency generators. This whole place’s security system is run on electricity. Without it, the villains can just walk right in! And honestly, I don’t even have to fight you, you idiot, I’ve got what I came for.”

Ojiro’s eyes narrowed, “And what is that?”

Mineta pulled a spray bottle out of his bag and got to work spraying the balls attaching Hitoshi to the floor, “Bait.”

As he sprayed them, the balls turned green and took on a mossy appearance and something clicked in HItoshi’s brain, “You’re trapper! Iz...Cheat Code was right! Todoroki wasn’t the traitor!”

“Why the fuck would Todoroki be the traitor?” Mineta scoffed. “He doesn’t have the range. Do you know how hard it was to keep everyone from seeing my true colors? Pretending I was more interested in the girls than the info I was getting everyday? Todoroki could never.”

Hitoshi flailed as Mineta tried to pick him up, but he felt the pinch of a needle at his neck and a cold numbness started radiating out from the point, “What….what did you…?”

“Muscle relaxant.” Mineta bragged. “Only works for a few minutes, but that’s more than enough to get the great Cheat Code to come save you. Now come on. We’ve got a trap to set.”

Hitoshi fell asleep listening to Ojiro call out for help.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: December 24, 2021 (MST)

Blackout

Chapter Summary

Things escalate.

Chapter Notes

Art!
claire ;P X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku knew that something was wrong as soon as the power went out. He waited for the backup generators to kick in, but when nothing happened, he immediately kicked into action. He tried to check the cameras, but without the power from the grid or the generators, they were still offline. They would have still had visualization of the students from the little spider bots that Mei had created….if his computer hadn't been affected by the blackout. This was bad. This was very very bad.

"Mei." Izuku asked. "What would cause a critical failure like this?"

"Sabotage." Mei answered grimly. "Someone would have had to destroy or disable every single backup generator and the backups to the backups before cutting the power to get it to go out like this."

"So this is an attack." Izuku took a deep breath. "How soon can we have power back online?"

"Give me five minutes." Mei was already grabbing her tools, "Maybe ten if I run into trouble."

Izuku nodded. "I need to track down my laptop. I'll try to find some of the students and have them guard you. Our highest priorities are to get power back online and probably find uraraka, since she'll make communication easier…."

His phone buzzed in his pocket and he frowned as he looked at who the message was from, "Why is Kaminari of all people texting me?"

There was an image attached and Izuku clicked on it hesitantly, expecting a meme, not a photo of Hitoshi tangled in Minetas purple balls in one of the back halls of UA. His mouth went dry.

“Nevermind.” Izuku swallowed. “Priorities changed.”

And then they heard something crash.

Mina hurried down the hall, looking for any one of her classmates. She’d gotten separated from her partner by some of the 1B students with creepy quirks and hadn’t been *too* concerned about it, but then the lights went out, so it was just her, acid skating down the hall in almost pitch black darkness. She heard a large crash and pushed herself even faster.

She saw an odd shape moving away from her through the darkness and called out, “Hey! Wait up!”

The shape started going faster and Mina huffed in frustration, “Hey! I said, wait up, don’t run away from me!”

She skated after them as fast as she could go and rammed into them within seconds, sending the shape sprawling to the floor.

“Hey! What’s the big idea?!” Mineta’s shrill voice echoed through the hall and Mina groaned. Of course it had to be *Mineta.*

She looked around the hall and froze when she saw Shinso, unconscious and completely stuck in a net of purple balls, “Uh...you weren’t partnered with Shinso for the exercise.”

There was just enough light for her to see Mineta roll his eyes, “Yeah, no shit. Now just run away and maybe I’ll let you live.”

“What are you talking about?” Mina scrambled to her feet. “What are you doing with Shinso?!”

“None of your business, bitch.” Mineta growled.

“Uh, no?” Mina coated her hands with acid. “You’re trying to hurt one of my friends so, uh, *duh* , yeah, it’s my business!”

She skated by and tried to grab Shinso, only to get tripped up by a barrage of sticky balls landing right in her path. She managed to catch her footing again and turned back toward Mineta, dropping into a fighting stance, only to freeze as she realized the balls were dissolving

as soona s they came in contact with her acid.

“Wait, that looks familiar…” Mina’s jaw dropped. “I saw pictures of that on the news. You..you’re Trapper, you’re a villain!”

“Nice of you to finally catch on.” Mineta said dryly. “Now get out of my way!”

Todoroki looked around the room when the lights went out, taking in the teachers’ expressions with a growing sense of dread, “The blackout isn’t part of the exercise, is it?”

“No.” Aizawa said seriously. “It isn’t.”

“Well, the plans to attack the camp obviously didn’t work.” Shigaraki said. “So instead of abandoning the quest, they must have decided to keep going after their objectives and attack UA directly. If they had the balls to do it though, they didn’t run it by me at all.”

“Is there anything else you can give us?” Nedzu asked. “I cannot imagine you would come here without significant leverage.”

“I can tell you the party members and their quirks.” Shigaraki offered. “They did the little side quest at the mall to try and hide them, which I didn’t know about either, for whatever that’s worth.”

Tsukauchi flipped to a new page in his notebook, “You’ve got a deal, what are we up against?”

“The most serious threats will be a frid chicken nugget called Dabi and a psychotic bitch named Toga.” Shigaraki said. “Fire powers and a quirk that lets her look like anyone, but they’re both smart and know what they’re doing. In terms of immediate danger, though, you’re looking at two esscaped convicts. Muscular and Moonfish. I trust you don’t need more info on them.”

Todoroki watched as Tsuakuchi went pale, “No. I think we know their threat level just fine.”

Shigaraki nodded, “Ok then, outside of those four, we’ve got a couple wild cards. Mustard can create a poison gas, Magne has magnet powers, and Mr. Compress can do what his name says: compress stuff into these puny little marbles. They’re all dangerous. Sensei wouldn’t have recruited them otherwise.”

“Very well.” Nedzu said. “Aizawa, get ahold of Present Mic. I think we have a use for radio communications. I will call Mandalay and have her use telepathy to inform the students.”

Muscular grinned and shook out his fist, “How did I do, boss?”

“This is about killing false heroes, not showing off.” Spinner complained.

“Oh, come on now.” Mr. Compress cut in. “Destroying the wall of UA with one punch is quite impressive.”

“See?” Muscular flexed. “ *Someone* appreciates my greatness. Now let’s see some blood!”

“Blood.” Moonfish’s groans sounded almost inspired.”

“Finally.” Spinner growled. “We have work to do.”

“Yay!” Toga jumped up and down. “I get to drink all the little heroes blood! This is gonna be so much fun!”

“Just make sure you get enough.” Dabi said. “Mustard, cover our path so the local heroes can’t give back up.”

“Don't tell me what to do.” Mustard growled, but even as he spoke, he was already letting off a large cloud of poisonous gas. “These fake heroes don’t stand a chance.”

“Before we fight, just remember that Trapper’s been exposed.” Dabi warned. “So if you see him, get him out. Oh, and Shiggy’s a traitor, so kill him if you get the chance and assume these heroes know your quirks.”

“Heh, as if that’ll help ‘em.” Muscular cracked his knuckles. “These heroes don’t stand a chance.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: January 7, 2022 (MST)

Poison

Chapter Summary

Things are in full swing!

Chapter Notes

Art!
GuardianSoul X
Compass

Memes!
X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For once, Nedzu did not have the chance to open the door before Midoriya slammed it open and came barging in, “I need my laptop.”

Nedzu nodded and gestured to the laptop, “We received a ping from your program just moments before the loud crash.”

“That means the league has already arrived.” Midoriya nodded and crossed to sit at Nedzu’s desk, shooing Shigaraki out of his seat so that he could sit down. “Based on the lack of fighting, I’m assuming there weren’t two traitors after all?”

“No, what does everyone keep thinking that?” Shgiaraki complained. “Icy Cat never gave me any info at all. And who are you anyway?”

Midoriya looked up and glared at him, “You can call me Cheat Code. I’m sure you’ll understand why I don’t trust you.”

Shigaraki gulped, “Oh. You’re the little cheater from the USJ.”

“It’s not cheating if it saves lives.” Izuku turned back to his computer. “Now tell me everything you know. What am I up against?”

//

“What is that smell” Hagakure sniffed the air. “It’s like rotten eggs.”

“I’m not sure.” Jiro slammed her hand over her mouth and nose as she started to feel lightheaded. “I think we should get out of here.”

“It’s probably just…one of class 1B’s…quirks.” Hagakure said, more slowly than she should have, which made alarm bells go off inside Jiro’s head.

“No.” Jiro heard unfamiliar footsteps and turned toward them to see Spinner and a bunch of people she didn’t recognize emerging from the growing mist. “It’s villains.”

She was passed out before the villains even noticed her.

//

Mei dashed through the halls, her tool bag swinging by her side like a weapon as she held the phone to her ear, “Come on pick up!”

“Mei?” Ochako sounded confused when she answered, “Do you know what’s going on?”

“No time.” Mei snapped quickly. “Extra credit kun has been kidnapped. Go get him.”

She hung up and slid down the banister, eyes narrowing in on the door to the maintainance cabinet. She just needed to get to that room and she’d be able to get at least partial power back. Hopefully.

She scrambled back as a long blade slammed into the floor in front of her, “Flesh…give me blood!”

Mei swallowed and looked up at a guy in a straight jacket who looked even crazier than she was, “Oh crap.”

The minute that ochako heard that Hioshi had been kidnapped she was by his side within seconds. He was completely covered in Mineta’s sticky balls and Ocako cursed under her breath” Mineta? How did I miss that?!”

Hitoshi blinked, raising his head about an inch to look at her, “Ocha…what?”

“I’m here.”Ochako wasn’t quite sure how to grab him without getting stuck.” I’m gonna get you out of here, Where’s Mineta?”

“Fighting Mina.” Hitoshi slumped back down. “She figured out he was Trapper.”

“Ok.” Ochako swallowed. She’d help Mina later. “Let’s get you

someplace safe. “

“Show me your blood!!!!” she ducked down and hid behind Hitoshi just in time to see little kouta running for his life down the hall as the largest villain ochako had ever seen reached out to grab him.

“Shindig…” Ochako whimpered. “I have to…”

“Go. Save him.” Hitoshi smiled. “I can still talk, I’ll take care of myself.”

Ochako nodded and disappeared.

Tsu really hoped that Ochako was ok. She’d left in a hurry, but then again, she usually did these days, so it wouldn’t have been *too* concerning if it hadn’t been for the blackout and the phone call right before. She had the feeling there was something else going on besides the exercise.

Her night vision was a bit better than normal due to her quirk, but the shadows were still putting her on edge as she made her way through the halls to where Ragdoll was supposed to be. She knew that was most likely the point, since it was a test of courage, but it was still enough to make her pay more attention to her surroundings. That was probably the only reason she didn’t miss the knife flying at her out of the corner of her eye.

She hopped to the side just in time and the blade embedded itself in the wall instead of her braid. A blond girl with high buns and what looked like huge needles hanging from her backpack came out from the shadows with a pout, “Aww, but you’d look so much cuter if you were a bit more cut up.”

Tsu swallowed, “No thanks.”

She didn’t recognize this girl from class 1b, which didn’t paint a very nice picture when combined with the blackout and Ochako’s sudden disappearance. If there were villains here, then were they under attack? Were they allowed to fight back? What was going on?!

A voice rang out inside her head, “Students, this is Mandalay. The school is under attack by the league of villains. As the attack is happening on UA grounds, you are allowed to use your quirks to defend yourselves, but do not initiate attacks. Make your way to the cafeteria as soon as possible.”

Mandalay then started listing the attackers and their quirks as quickly as she could. Tsu gulped as Toga started to circle her, a hungry look on her face. Ok, so those needles must be so that she could gather blood and turn into other people. First priority was to keep Toga from getting her blood, then get away and meet up with the rest of the students.

She shifted into a fighting stance, which made Toga smile, “Are you ready to bleed now? You kinda spaced out for a minute and that’s no fun! I want you to feel it when I stab you! That way you can enjoy it too!”

Another knife came flying at her and Tsu hopped out of the way, “I think we enjoy different things.”

Toga scowled and this time, she threw her needles. She was fast and it was all Tsu could do to dodge until out of nowhere Toga yelped and stumbled as if she’d taken a hit from behind. Tsu felt a hand on her shoulder and whirled around to see a floating head that she *thought* she recognized as a girl from 1B.

“Sorry for scaring you.” the girl’s head said. “I’m setsuna, I’m in the other class. Komoro has a plan, but we need to get that girl’s gasmask.”

Tsu nodded and flexed her tongue, “I can do that.”

Students, this is Mandalay. The school is under attack by the league of villains. As the attack is happening on UA grounds, you are allowed to use your quirks to defend yourselves, but do not initiate attacks. Make your way to the cafeteria as soon as possible.

The villains quirks are as follows

Dabi: cremation

Spinner: Lizard traits and blood based paralysis

Toga: blood based appearance changes

Mustard: poison gas

Magne: Magnetism

Mr. Compress: compression

Trapper, aka, Minrou Mineta: sticky hair

Mei bolted to the nearest tunnel entrance and quickly solved the puzzle to get inside before slamming the door behind her. The knives slammed through the wall, but that psycho couldn't get to her if he didn't know where she was, so she moved quietly as she made her way back to the labs. She really hoped the time she'd waste would be worth it, but there was no way she'd be able to do this without her babies. She dropped down into the lab and grabbed a variety of her projects, both the successes and the failures. The successes would do what they were supposed to and the failures would blow up, so it was a win-win!

She ran back to the basement as fast as she could through the tunnels, exiting to the view of the straightjacket guy still attacking the wall where she'd disappeared. He'd almost completely ripped it open by this point and Mei got a determined look as she launched a stink bomb into the air, "Look alive!"

The guy turned toward her like some sort of eldritch entity, but soon enough reared back as the stench of the stink bomb filled the hall. Mei covered her mouth and nose and hoped this actually worked. She'd tried to channel her inner Izu-kun and she'd seen that the guy was wearing a blindfold, which meant that he wasn't finding her by sight, which meant that it was either smell or sound, but he hadn't been able to find ehr in the tunnels and if he had enhanced hearing then she'd be a shishkabob right now. That left that he was probably smelling for her blood or something creepy like that and that was easily countered by a stink bomb. She smiled as her opponent became disoriented and she realized that she'd been right.

Izu-kun would be so proud.

She grabbed one of her failed babies that was supposed to be an early version of her jetpack and turned it on before launching it at the guy's head. It exploded about a second earlier than she'd hoped, but it was still enough to force him back. She ran for the maintenance room door, only to find her path blocked by knives. Again. This was getting old.

"Blood. Flesh…"

"What a mad banquet of darkness."

Mei felt hands grab her and she yelped as she was carried around the

corner by one of the hero students with a full six arms, “Are you hurt? You’re one of the support students, right? We need to run.”

“No, what we need is to get the power back on.” Mei pushed the student, Shouji if she remembered right, away. “And to do that, I need to get in that stupid room.”

Shouji blinked for a moment and nodded, “Alright. Then Tokoyami and I will help you. Stay behind us.”

He raised his arms into a shield and raised himself up to his full height. Mei got ready to run. They were running out of time.

It took longer than he preferred to figure out where the hell Mustard was and lure Mina into an affected area. He had his gas mask, obviously, so he wasn’t affected, but the stupid pink idiot could hold her breath for an inferiatingly long time. At least she was out of the way now, but Mineta was definitely *not* in a good mood as he finally hurried back to where he’d left Shinso. Sending that text as a threat to Cheat Code hadn't seemed like a risk at the time, but then again, he hadn’t been planning on running into one of his classmates.

He breathed a sigh of relief when Shinso was still there, stuck to the floor exactly where he’d left him. He hadn’t even woken up yet! Mineta chuckled and kicked Shinso in the ribs, “Wake up Sleeping beauty, rise and shine. “

Shinso blinked, bleary eyed and raised his head, “What? What time is it?”

Mineta immediately looked at his watch. if he was correct, Shinso's quirk relied on confusing his target, so no matter what, he needed to know what he was talking about, “11 pm.”

His eyes widened as Shinso smirked, “got ya.”

“What are you…” apparently he was just confused enough by Shinso’s reaction for the quirk to kick in because he felt his brain go fuzzy and his arms fell limp at his sides, “Dissolve these stupid things and let me go.”

Mineta had no choice but to obey.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: January 14, 2022 (MST)

Battles

Chapter Summary

The fight is coming to a head.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dabi was supposed to be able to focus on traumatising Shouto tonight, but no. Of course he had to go and find the stupid gamer boy who should never have been put in charge of the league to begin with and kill him. Trapper had tried to give them as much info on the school's layout as possible, but it'd be built by a literal rat, so it was a maze. Speaking of the rat, Dabi was betting that he'd find Shigaraki right in his office. It was probably near the center, basing things on a traditional rat maze, but he wasn't too concerned about solving anything right now. That was what the new recruits' quirks were for, after all.

"Just compress the walls in front of us." Dabi ordered. "We're not playing by the rules of their little game."

The frog girl was pretty cute, and Himiko was still deciding on her opinion when it came to mushroom girl, but she thought the lizard girl could *definitely* use some improvements, "Why don't you bleed when you split apart? You'd be so much cuter if you just bled a little more!"

"Yeah, because that's not creepy at all." Setsuna muttered.

The disembodied hands were grasping at the ugly gas mask around Himiko's neck and she would have given it up if it hadn't also been connected to her blood canisters to let her drink on the go. Not that she had any blood in them at the moment, but she was working on that!

"Come on! I just want a little taste of your blood!" HImiko cried out. "I'm only gonna hurt you a little, doesn't that sound like fun?"

“No!” all three girls answered in unison and it would have been cute if they were just bloodied up a little more.

The frog girl’s tongue came barreling toward her again and she managed to slash it with her knife, but the attack created an opening for the lizard girl to send a leg and kick her in the back of the knees, which then allowed the frog girl to wrap her tongue around the mask and *pull.* The tubing popped out and Toga scowled as she stood back up. “That was totally not cute.”

“Setsuna, get out of here.” the mushroom girl said. “Asui, put on the mask.”

“Call me Tsu.” the frog girl said, putting on the mask.

“Oh, Tsu?” HImiko’s eyes lit up. “What a cute name!”

The frog girl glared at her from above the mask, “only my friends get to call me Tsu.”

HImiko smiled, “Well, I guess this means we’re friends th..”

Her voice cut out when she suddenly stopped being able to breath. There was a slight mist in the air, “M...Mustard?”

“No.” the mushroom girl answered. “Spores. You’re not getting anybody’s blood tonight.”

The mist disappeared, but she could still feel it in her lungs as her vision went spotty, “Wha…?”

The lizard girl ran back up, “I found a rope, let’s tie her up.”

Well, that hadn’t been fun at all.

Shouji shielded Mei with his arms as Dark shadow grappled with moonfish. Shouji could use some armor for his arms, but she’d have to be careful not to restrict his range of movement. Maybe something like a cape, made of kevlar obviously, and Tokoyami’s needed some more in terms of defense and maybe some offense too, but she’d have to experiment and…

Mei forced herself to pay attention to the fight and brav someone for babies, just some taser marbles, so nothing fancy, but still effective enough that a faceful of them was able to keep Moonfish from slicing off one of shoji’s extra arms.

As soon as Moonfish reared back, Shouji dashed forward and yanked the door to the maintenance room open, “Go! We’ll make sure he doesn’t follow you!”

Mei nodded and dropped one more stink bomb, just to make sure Moonfish still couldn't’ rely on his sense of smell, then ran into the maintenance room. She slammed the door behind her and Mei turned on a flashlight and opened her tool bag, “Alright, time to get this baby working again.”

Shinso ran through the halls, trying to put as much distance between himself and Mineta as he could. He’d ordered him to go turn himself in to the teachers, but Hitoshi wasn’t stupid. He knew that the likelihood of *something* knocking Mineta out of his control before then was almost a guarantee and he didn’t want to be anywhere near the creep when that happened. Izuku had warned them that there had to be another traitor. Why hadn’t they focused harder on figuring out Trapper’s identity?

He scrambled back when Spinner dropped from the ceiling right in front of him, “Hello again, *hero.* We didn’t quite get the chance to finish our conversation last time.”

Ochako teleported to Kouta, “Hey, I’m gonna get you out of here, ok?”

“It’s him. It’s Muscular. The...he killed my mom and dad!” Kouta’s eyes widened and he pointed over her shoulder, “Watch out!”

A punch barred into her from the side, knocking her through the wall. She groaned and stood up to see the huge villain gloating as he towered over her, “This is the hero they sent after me? A puny little girl?!”

Ochako shifted into a fighting stance, “A puny little girl who beat all might in a fair fight.”

The villain Laughed, “Oh, you’ve got spunk, but even All Might couldn’t beat me. I’m gonna *love* killing you.”

Ochako grit her teeth, “And I’m gonna love beating that stupid grin off your face!”

She felt a tingle run down her spine just in time for Muscular to throw a massive quirk-enhanced punch right at her face. She channeled one

for all and moved faster than she thought possible, grabbing him in preparation for a judo flip and activating her quirk so that she could actually slip him completely over her shoulder and slam him into the ground.

It didn't even keep him down for a second. He twisted her arm and she helped as she felt the bone snap, "Pathetic. Maybe killing the kid will be more fun."

She bit her lip and launched herself at him, "Don't touch him!"

The most she'd ever teleported on repeat had been when she'd first developed her quirk. Ever since she'd learned to control her jumps, she hadn't teleported for more than two or three times in a row. The only exception had been the mall, but even then, she'd only been teleporting herself. The only time she'd teleported on repeat with another person in tow had been that one time with All Might and that had only been twice. She knew it'd be draining, but at the moment, she really couldn't bring herself to care. She grabbed onto Muscular and teleported to every single one of her classmates, not staying at any of them long enough for Muscular to get his bearings. Around number ten, she started getting nauseous, but she didn't stop. She wasn't going to let this guy hurt Kouta or anybody else!

She let loose a guttural yell as she teleported to Aizawa, pouting as she threw a now exhausted Muscular to the floor. It took her a minute to push down her nausea and realize that there was now an entire roomful of people that were all staring at her in shock.

Shigaraki was sitting right next to Izuku, who was sitting at Nedzu's desk, which was the only reason why she didn't immediately grab him and give him the same treatment as Muscular. He gave a low whistle, "and this is why I'm glad I'm switching sides."

"You're still on thin ice." Izuku said without looking up. "Eraserhead can handle this goon if he wakes up. Hitoshi got himself out, but we know he's a target, so back him up. The teachers are getting the rest of the students."

Ochako nodded, "Got it. See you soon!"

Mineta cursed under his breath as he put on his gas mask. That stupid brainwasher! How had he gotten the jump on him so quickly?! And now his bait for Cheat Code was gone and the entire attack was going so far off of the plans that it wasn't even *close* to the same attack. He

was out of backup plans to his backup plans and now was firmly in the improvisation territory, which was not where a trapper preferred to be.

He took a deep breath. He could still make this work in his favor. Sure, he'd let Shinso slip through his fingers, but Mustard had already set up the gas trap and he just needed to make sure as many of his classmates as possible got caught in it. Most of them still didn't know he was the traitor, so he'd just lure them into the gas and take down as many as he could!

He saw Sero up ahead, his freakishly large elbows backlit against what little light there was, "Hey, do you know what's going on."

Sero's eyes widened and instead of greeting him like a friend as Mineta had expected, Sero immediately shot out his tape, "Guys, the traitor's here, get him!"

Mineta swore and used his balls to stick Sero's tape to the wall instead of to him, but he wasn't quite sure what other backup Sero had. Who had he been paired with for the exercise? What members of 1b were around? It had to be more than one person from what Sero had said, so the safest option was...well, to do what he planned to begin with. He may not have planned to have his classmates know his true intentions already, but actually this made his job ironically easier.

"Catch me if you can, bitches." MIneta muttered under his breath. "Until you can't breath, that is."

He ran as fast as he could in the direction of the gas, running just slow enough that his classmates stayed focused on him and not on the gathering mist until it was too late. He could hear multiple sets of footsteps, probably between three and five, so a good number if everyone fell for his trap. He adjusted his gasmask and kept running until he heard a few thumps behind him, then turned around and doubled back. Sero and a brown haired kid from 1B had fallen for it, but whatever others there were had gotten away.

Mineta shrugged it off and went to go find more students. There was no lack of targets wandering the halls at this point, he just had to find some more prey.

Hitoshi swallowed and stared down Spinner, "What conversation? Last I remember you were trying to kill me."

Spinner frowned, “You said I had other people in my head. Explain what you meant.”

“O-oh.” Hitoshi hesitated. He *could* take control right now, but…Spinner didn’t seem intent on killing him at the moment and he could always brainwash him later. Izuku was always emphasizing how important information was and for some reason, Hitoshi was intrigued. “Uh, ok? It was just one other presence, but it just…felt like there were two minds? Two consciousnesses, kinda? It’s hard to explain.”

“But whose?” Spinner looked so confused and almost angry. “Whose mind is it?”

“I-I don’t know.” Hitoshi’s mind spun. He did *not* want an angry hero killer. “I might be able to brainwash it though. To interrogate it! Um, I don’t know how else to figure it out, sorry.”

Hitoshi silently cursed himself. He had just offered to brainwash the angry murderer. Of course *that* was a brilliant plan. Way to not make his opponent angry!

“Do it.”

Hitoshi reared back in surprise, “What?”

“Do it.” Spinner ordered again. “I’m not going to have other people messing with my head, not while I go about Stain’s important mission. I need to know what I am fighting, so figure it out or I swear on Stain’s blood that I will cut you down where you stand.”

“Ok.” Hitoshi took control immediately. “That’s a pretty convincing reason to brainwash somebody, not gonna lie.”

He took a deep breath and hoped this actually worked. Honestly, brainwashing Dark Shadow from Tokoyami’s brain had been hard enough, and he was still working on taking half control so that people could actually talk under his brainwashing, so there was every chance this was going to blow up in his face.

But if it didn’t, it would be really cool.

First, he focused on Spinner’s mind until he could feel the other presence inside it, then he pushed a little forward. The other mind didn’t resist his control, not in the way Dark Shadow’s had. In fact, it was almost like it knew what he was trying to do and hesitantly

approved of the plan. After he had control of both, he let go of Spinner, not trusting himself to be able to successfully interrogate if he was trying to brainwash multiple people and, oddly enough, he was pretty sure that Spinner wasn't going to kill him until he figured out who the other presence was, so it was a pretty safe move. Or at least, Hitohisi hoped so.

Then he dialed back his control. He gave the other presence just enough control to be able to speak, but carefully kept enough that it *should* answer his questions. If everything went according to plan, that was, so it was about a 50/50 shot.

Hitoshi carefully thought through the wording of his question before speaking, careful to phrase his question as an order, "Tell me who you are."

Spinner's voice spoke blankly, "I am Stain, the hero killer."

It took all of Hitoshi's willpower to not drop his control right then and there.

"I thought you were dead." Hitoshi said. "Tell us how you're here."

"A part of me was torn out when All for One stole my quirk." Stain answered. "He is the one who had me killed."

Spinner let out a guttural scream and Hitoshi stumbled back at the sheer rage emanating from him, losing both his control and his footing. He scrambled back as Spinner drew his Katana, "He lied. Sensei lied. He told me that the heroes killed Stain. He *lied."*

Hitoshi didn't know what to say, just scrambled backwards to put as much distance as he could between himself and the hero killers. Both of them. Oh no. he needed to ask a question and quickly. He froze, no need for Spinner's, *STain's,* paralyzation quirk, when the hero killers turned on him.

"I have no reason to kill you, for now." Spinner said, fire in his eyes. "I have more important prey to take care of."

He leapt onto the wall and scurried away and Hitoshi waited for him to disappear completely before falling onto his back in relief, "What the heck just happened?"

Ochako suddenly appeared beside him, "What did I miss?"

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter: January 21, 2022 (MST)

Light

Chapter Summary

The students fight to get power.

Chapter Notes

Art!
BitchAssWitch(Winter)

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Monoma did a double take as soon as he saw the obvious pair of villains literally carving their way towards Nedzu's office, "Well, now, *that's* interesting."

Pony grabbed his arm, "Stop. Teachers will take care of them. We run."

Monoma scoffed and shook his arm loose, "You can run if you want, but I know you've noticed the gap between us and 1A. What's the difference? Not our test scores, that's for sure. They've fought *real* villains! I'm not going to let them keep leaving us in the dust!"

Pony hesitated for a moment before giving a determined nod, "We go."

Monoma grinned and cracked his neck, "Let's do this. Try to pin the guy in the yellow coat, he looks like he's got a useful quirk. I want it."

Shouji hissed and grabbed his arm. The hand wasn't a big loss, he could grow it back, what *was* an issue was that Dark Shadow hadn't taken kindly to one of it's friends being hurt. As soon as Tokoyami had seen Moonfish hurt him, he'd completely lost control and Dark Shadow had started going berserk. It had gone after moonfish first, thankfully, and the villain was somewhere down the hall with who knew how many broken bones, but now Dark Shadow was stalking anything that moved, which was unfortunately mostly Shouji. Tokoyami was trying to get it to calm down, but wasn't having much success.

Suddenly, there was a cheer from inside the maintenance room and Shouji felt a stab of fear as Dark Shadow zeroed in on the noise. It let out a massive roar and launched itself at the door. Shouji knew that the wall wouldn't stand a chance and that support student wouldn't be able to do a thing against it before she'd be torn to shreds. He took a step forward, not knowing what he could do, but at the same time knowing he had to do *something.*

And then the lights turned on.

Dark Shadow whimpered in the suddenly harsh lighting and Tokoyami was almost sobbing with relief as Shouji went to go comfort him, "The agent of chaos must have restored the power. What a mad banquet of darkness, but...I...I think I'd prefer to stay in the light for now."

Shouji nodded, "Yeah. That sounds like a good plan."

Kendo was lightheaded even now that the gas was finally clearing up. This poison gas smelled nasty and she would have known to avoid it even without Mandalays's warning, but knowing all the villain's quirk definitely gave them an advantage, as did knowing who the traitor *really* was. She thought she'd seen Mineta through the fog once or twice, but everytime she tried to chase him, he disappeared before she could find him.

At least she and Tetsutetsu had knocked out that Mustard kid. Now, though, they had to find everyone who had passed out from the gas and get them to Recovery Girl. Hopefully nobody but Tetsutetsu had gotten hit with any bullets, but Kendo wasn't counting on that, so they needed to hurry.

She made her hands as big as she could and started running, "Come on, let's grab everyone we can and get back to the Pussycats."

Pony shot her horns forward and snagged Mr. Compress's coat,

"Dabi, wait."

Dabi glared back and shot a stream of fire in the students general direction, "Get yourself out of it, you dumbass, or I'm leaving you behind."

Compress sounded like he was pouting underneath his mask, "Ah, but my coat will rip."

Dabi rolled his eyes, “Suit yourself, I’ve got a traitor to take care of.”

Monoma waited until he was around the corner before dashing forward and ripping Compress’s glove off, “And now, let’s see what your quirk can really do.”

“What are you talking about?” Compress sounded confused. “My quirk is…”

He disappeared and Monoma was left holding a marble, “Ok, this is going to be nice.”

Ochako sighed after Hitoshi finished filling her in, “Ok, so what now?”

“Well, the lights are back on.” Hitoshi shrugged. “And I’m no longer being targeted by a serial killer, so…maybe go back to the teachers?”

“Maybe…” Ochako frowned. “But I feel like the biggest threats are still out there.”

“Like Shigaraki?” Hitoshi asked.

“No, he’s apparently on our side now.” Ochako answered absently.

Hitoshi blinked, “Wait, what?”

“Izuku was being almost polite to him when I dropped in earlier.” Ochako said. “I think he’s the one who gave mandalay the info on the villain’s quirks.”

“Oh.” Hitoshi frowned. “I guess...I guess I was wrong about Todoroki being the traitor then.”

“Detective Tsukauchi was there too.” Ochako said. “So I think he interrogated both of them. I don’t know what’s going on, but I’m just scared that Kurogiri is going to teleport in and mess everything up. If I just had an anchor on him, then….”

“Then you’d be able to keep up.” HItoshi nodded. “I can brainwash him long enough for you to touch him. I don’t think the villains have figured out my quirk yet. Mineta thought it was based on confusion, so...we’re still in the cellar.”

“I just hope he’s still around.” Ochako said. “If he is...he’s probably after Shigaraki for turning on them.”

She grabbed Hitoshi and felt the world shift as they jumped. A second later, they were in Nedzu's office and Hitoshi was talking deep breaths to calm the nausea, "I think I'm actually starting to get used to that."

"What do you guys need?" Izuku said. "Now that the power's back, I'm kinda busy figuring out how to best use the weapons systems."

"We were hoping to track Kurogiri." Hitoshi answered. "Figured here was a good place to start, since the villains are probably going to be after Dusty here."

"I'd be offended if you weren't right." Shigaraki whined.

"Yeah," Todoroki drawled. "You knew what the consequences of switching parties would be."

Shiragaki groaned, the cat on his lap nuzzling up to his face to try and comfort thim, "Don't remind me. I'm still worried about the big boss."

"The big boss?" Todoroki asked. "Your Sensei?"

Shigarakai nodded, "All for One."

Nedzu nodded grimly, "Then I will call All Might and tell him to be prepared for an attack. It is a good thing that young Mei managed to get the power back on so we can bolster our defenses."

"What did I do?" Mei popped her head out from a secret tunnel in the ceiling. "Oh, um, hi? What's one of the villain's doing here?"

"Switching sides." Izuku answered. "Now get down here and man Nedzu's computer. The students have taken care of most of the villains but Mineta and Spinner are still on the loose."

Mei nodded and jumped down, "Any others we need to worry about?"

"Just this one." Izuku pressed the button that opened the door to Nedzu's office, revealing one very surprised villain who had been about to blow down the door. "Welcome Dabi. We've been expecting you."

Chapter End Notes

Next predicted update: January 24, 2022 (MST)

Brothers

Chapter Summary

The villains find out some interesting information.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Dia
qwirt1

Memes!
X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was a long moment of awkward silence as the heroes just stared at Dabi, who stared right back. Shouto thought Midoriya was absolutely insane for opening the door like he was inviting in a friend, not a villain, but he had to respect the audacity of the power move. It immediately put the heroes at an advantage and took away the element of surprise that Dabi had almost definitely been counting on.

Finally Nedzu broke the silence, “Oh my, this office is getting rather crowded isn’t it?”

Dabi responded by sending a stream of fire directly at Shigaraki, but Shouto created an icewall to protect him just in time. The wall melted immediately under the heat of Dabi’s flames, and Shouto glared at him, “Don’t you *dare* touch him.”

Epurr hissed in agreement and launched herself at Dabi, scratching at his scars and the staples on his face until Dabi ripped her off and flug her away with a snarl, “Get out of my way, Shouto Todoroki.”

“So Mineta told you my name.” Shouto rolled his eyes, “how impressive.”

Aizawa stepped in front of them, “Cheat Code, you take the others back to your lab. Use the tunnels, we’ll deal with him.”

“Fat chance.” Dabi tried to shoot more fire, but Aizawa shot him with a glare. “Oh, fuck this.”

He reached his hand into his pocket and grabbed something. Aizawa rushed forward, but Dabi just smirked, “Too late, he’s already on his way.”

Nedzu’s fur stood on end, “And who would that be?”

A swirl of purple mist appeared in the middle of the room and Kurogiri stepped out, “You called?”

Mineta was stuck to the wall, hiding in a patch of shadows near the ceiling as he watched the students gathering. The Pussycats were doing a headcount of all the students while the UA teachers stood off to one side, handcuffing all of the villains that the students had managed to take down. They had done a lot better than he’d thought they would, or maybe it was just that his allies had done worse, because the only villains missing from the *captured* pile were Dabi, Kurogiri, and himself.

And now the lights were back on.

This entire attack was turning into a disaster and Mineta didn’t know how to turn it around, not with their current numbers. However, they couldn't’ afford to fail either, because failure meant that they lost Shigaraki, who knew enough to cripple them...which was probably why their attack had failed in the first place. They needed to pull out something that the heroes coudlnt’ predict, something that Shigaraki’s knowledge wouldn’t help against, something so powerful that no matter even if they knew what they were up against, they wouldn’t be able to fight.

Mineta pulled out the phone he’d stolen from Kaminari. They needed the big guns.

Ochako looked over at Hitoshi, who nodded and both of them rushed forward.

“What do you think you’re doing here?” Hitoshi yelled. “If you want to get to him you’re going to have to go through us!”

“What are you…?” Kurogiri went limp just in time for Ochako to barrel into him and knock him from the brainwashing. She scrambled to her feet with a grin as Kurogiri started floating.

“Got ya.” Ochako put her hands together, “Release!”

Dabi scowled and turned to Kurogiri, “Nevermind you useless waste of oxygen, I’ll handle Shigaraki myself.”

Kurogiri nodded and disappeared and Ochako grabbed Hitoshi’s hand, “Let me know if you need me to stop.”

Hitoshi’s expression hardened, “I’ll stop when we catch him.”

Gravity shifted and they ended up on top of the school, but the moment they got there, Kurogiri left again. After three more jumps of his, Ochako stopped, “He’s trying to wear us out.”

Hitoshi looked green, “It’s working.”

Ochako bit her lip and looked around. They’d ended up in one of the fake cities that UA used as a training ground, “If I can just get...oh, i’m an idiot.”

“What?” Hitoshi fornwed. “What did you just realize?”

“Well…” Ochako started. “I can determine more or less where around my target I appear, right, so if I appear close enough, then I can grab him and bring him back.”

“Only if you’re fast enough to do that before he gets away from you.” HItoshi pointed out. “His teleporting hasn’t been throwing yours off, has it?”

“Not enough that I can’t make this work.” Ochako’s eyes were determined as she dropped Hitoshi’s hand. “I’ll be back soon.

Hitoshi nodded, “And I’ll be waiting.”

Shouto glanced back and forth between Shigaraki and Dabi before turning to Midoriya, “There’s a tunnel entrance just right here, right? The one your girlfriend came out of.”

Midoriya looked like he was about to say something else before he stopped himself with a blush, “Yeah. the one my girlfriend came out of. That one.”

Shout didn’t have time to figure out *that* reaction, nor did he think that was the most important thing to worry while there was a psychopathic flame killer after them, “I’ll stay back and help Aizawa, you two get Dusty to safety.”

Hatsume nodded, “Got it.”

“Do I get any say in this?” Shigaraki complained.

“No.” Midoriya answered shortly. “Good luck Todoroki.”

“If you’re going to do something, do it quickly.” Aizawa snapped. “I *do* have to blink eventually.”

Shouto glared at Dabi and went to stand besides Aizawa, “Go. we got this.”

“I believe that I shall accompany you.” Nedzu said to Midoirya. “I do not believe the computers in this room will be functional for that much longer. Your workroom has a better set up.”

“And whose fault is that?” Midoriya responded.

There was a scramble behind them as they got into the tunnels, but Shouto was more concerned with the staring contest he was having with Dabi, who looked confused and angry, “Since when are you all buddy-buddy with Shigaraki?”

Shotuo shrugged, “Since my old man kicked me out and he was the one who kinda took me in.”

Dabi did a double take, “Wait, Dad kicked you out? He didn’t even kick *me* out.”

Shouto froze, his thoughts racing as he tried to make sense of *that* until everything finally clicked, “Touya?!”

Kurogiri knew he hadn’t *completely* shaken the girl, Uraraka, that would have been a ridiculous assumption. If what Trapper had said was correct, she now had a permanent tag on him that could not be removed without a significant change in weight and it would not be safe to return to the base until that happened. He could starve himself for a few days, that would be simple enough, but there *was* the question of if the change would be sufficient. There was also the option of amputation, but he did not want to impact his usefulness to Sensei if he could help it. Basically, for the moment, he was out of good options.

He felt something barrel into him and then all of a sudden, the world was shifting just like it did when he warped. He knew the girl must

have grabbed him and forced him to teleport, but why would she do something like that? He was used to teleporting and ending up in a new location, so there was no way she could throw him off using that strategy!

He readied himself for a fight before he even figured out where he had ended up and his eyes widened when he heard Tomura's voice, "I'm not coming back, will you stop trying to grab me already?!"

"You surely can't be abandoning Sensei so easily…" Kurogiri felt his brain go blank again, realizing too late that young Tomura was nowhere to be seen. He'd fallen for their ruse and this time, there was no one around to knock him out of it. He was somewhere within the UA training grounds and alone with the teleporter and the brainwasher. Wonderful.

"Alright, Hitoshi." The girl said. "He's all yours."

The brainwasher, Hitoshi Shinso, came into view, fiddling with a mask on his face that Kurogiri recognized as the support item he'd used during the sports festival. His quirk must have something to do with his voice, then, rather than confusion as Trapper had suggested. Sensei would be pleased.

"I am really getting sick of this stupid sensation." Shinso muttered. "Multiple people in the same head, which based on Spinner's answer, means you've got someone else's quirk. So? Whose quirks do you have?"

Kurogiri didn't answer, obviously. He didn't even know what Shinso was talking about. He wasn't a Nomu, he was simply...Kurogiri. That was who he was and that was who he had always been.

Shinso facepalmed, "Oh, right. I need to phrase it as an order, not a question. Tell me what quirks you have."

"Warp Gate is created from multiple quirks." Kurogiri answered, the shock of his response almost enough to knock him from the brainwashing. Not quite, unfortunately, but Kurogiri's brain was absolutely reeling. He was a nomu. He was just another one of the doctor's creations. But the nomu were slaves and he was Sensei's trusted servant...right?

"Ok…" Shinso hummed thoughtfully. "Tell me where you got them."

"All for One gave them to me." Kurogiri answered. "He stole them

from their original holders."

"Ask him more about All for One." Uraraka said. "I'm pretty sure he has something to do with One for All."

Shinso nodded, "Tell me about All for One and his connection with One for All."

As soon as he'd said his name, Dabi turned tail and ran. Shouto gave chase as he threw himself out the window and Shouto used an ice slide to follow him. Dabi, no, *touya,* snarled as he shot another jet of flame in Shouto's direction, melting the slide so the other heroes would have difficulty following, "So you figured it out. What? You want a gold star or something?"

"No, but an explanation would be nice." Shouto dodged the attack and shot back with an ice spear, "I thought you were dead."

"Yeah, well maybe it should have stayed that way."

Dabi snapped. "What you guy going to do now, go away to the old man?"

"Are you kidding? I haven't talked to Endeavor in weeks." Shouto said. "He kicked me out, remember?"

"Why?" Dabi huffed but didn't send out any more flames, which was progress, "why would the great endeavor kick out his masterpiece?"

"He was trying to prove that I needed him and his power to succeed." Shouto shrugged, "And I figured out that I didn't."

Dabi was silent for a long moment before he suddenly cracked up laughing, "That is a bigger fuck you to Dad than I've ever even though of. Are you even going to be a hero?"

"If I do, it won't be full time." Shouto said. "I'm actually making a name for myself as a gamer, so I want to see where that goes before I commit to anything."

" a gamer!?" Dabi cackled harder. "Endabor's perfect masterpiece is dropping out of heroics to be a gamer? Oh my god, that's amazing!"

Shouto considered pointing out that he might not be dropping out of heroic entirely, at least not right wavy, but figured at this point that strategy might start another boss fight, so it was probably better to

just keep his mouth shut and let his brother have this.

Eventually, Dabi stopped laughing and gave him anod, “do me a favor and don’t tell dad I’m alive. I’ve got plans for how to devastate him even more than his failed masterpiece already has.”

Shouto smiled, “I guess I look forward to seeing what you come up with then.”

Dabi shook his head and laughed as he walked away, “A gamer.”

Shotuo rolled his eyes. He took pride in being a disappointment, so dabi’s reaction didn’t really bother him. He needed to reunite with the students and…

“I can’t believe you got him to just walk away.”

Shotuo tried to shoot a stream of fire in the direction of the voice, but his quirk didn’t work. Shouto deflated in relief, “Oh aizawa, it’s just you. How much of that did you hear?”

“Enough.” Aizawa's hair fell. “But don’t worry. It would be illogical for me to spill a secret you already promised to keep. Plus I’m curious too. Also…” he shot out his capture weapon and caught shouto as he couldn't’ run away. “We need to talk about your current living situation.”

All for One was angry. He was a patient man, he enjoyed pulling strings and then watching those tiny actions have great effects over decades. He had been looking forward to the sweet devastation on All Might’s face when he realized Shigaraki’s true identity for almost fifteen years now and yet, that plan had been ruined in a moment by the stupid child’s teenage rebellion! He’d raised Shigaraki to be his masterpiece and carefully controlled his upbringing so that he would never question it, but no, somehow when he wasn’t looking, Tomura had decided that he wanted to be *normal,* as if that was even a possibility.

Well, All Might’s face when he realized he’d been too slow to save his master’s grandchild from being murdered by his arch nemesis would not be *quite* as exquisite, but it would make a half-decent consolation prize. It would have been easiest to have Kurogiri warp him over to UA, but for some reason, he was unable to get in contact with *that* particular project, which probably meant he had fallen into the hands of the heroes. It was a terrible loss, one that he could undoubtedly

blame Tomura for, but at the very least, it would lead to the heroes learning his true identity, which would deal a powerful psychological blow in All for One's favor. Not ideal, but it was something he could work with, and arriving normally would make for a grander entrance anyway.

He stood in front of the UA gates, undamaged so far. The heroes inside hadn't yet called for outside backup, most likely because they had the attack under control and to avoid any negative press coverage that could damage the school. All for One smiled. They wouldn't be able to cover it up after what he was about to do.

He held up his hand, "Air Cannon times three."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: January 25, 2022 (MST)

Identities

Chapter Summary

Secrets are revealed.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ochako paced back and forth across the street of the fake city, “Why didn’t he tell me?!”

“I don’t know.” Hitoshi shrugged sympathetically. “Maybe he forgot?”

“Forgot about a lifelong nemesis, Hitoshi?” Ochako huffed. “No. he just didn’t want to tell me. I mean, he told me that he had enemies, but I mean, he’s the number one hero, so of course he does, but someone who has killed or at least brutally injured pretty much every single holder of One for All? That seems like something he should have mentioned *before* I agreed to the quirk, right?”

Hitsohi rubbed his temples, “I agree completely.”

Ochako stopped, “Are you ok?”

“I’m fine.” Hitoshi did not look fine. “It’s just that maintaining half control is a little more taxing than full control and I’ve had Kurogiri under for a while.”

“I am so sorry!” Ochako gasped. “I…we can deal with All for One later, um, what else do we need from this guy.”

“I'm not sure.” Hitoshi said. “I can just order him to go to sleep, but…Ok, um, so he said that all of the quirks that made warp gate were stolen, didn’t he?”

“Yeah.” Ochako nodded. “Why?”

“Well, I’m just wondering.” HItoshi turned to Kurogiri. “Tell me if you chose to work for All for One.”

“No.” Kurogiri said blankly.

“Then tell me why you work for him.” Hitoshi insisted.

Kurogiri seemed to fight the brainwashing for a moment before he answered, “Because he erased my memories and brainwashed me into being devoted to him.”

Both Ochako and Hitoshi were shocked into silence for a long moment before HItoshi managed to shake himself out of it, “Ok, then uh...well, I order you to not be devoted to All for One anymore. And to remember what he forced you to forget.”

“Can you even do that?” Ochako asked.

Hitoshi took a deep breath, “There’s only one way to find out.”

He dropped his control and they both dropped into fighting stances, but Kurogiri didn’t fight them. Instead, the mist gradually receded until it was just covering the hair on his head and he looked at them with bright yellow eyes that looked lost and a bit more than a little panicked, “Um, hi. My name is Oboro Shirakumo. Nice to meet you?”

Ochako glanced over to HItoshi, who shrugged, “I guess it worked.”

The ground shook, almost knocking the three of them over, and Shirakumo gulped, “He’s here.”

Izuku stared at the screen in shock. Half the school was gone. Before the ground started shaking, everything had been fine. Hitoshi and Uraraka had managed to catch Shirakumo, Dabi was fighting Todoroki, and the only villains still missing were Mineta and Spinner.

Everything was *fine*.

He sent some of the spider bots to the destroyed area, since the cameras there were obviously shot. Izuku felt a chill run down his spine as he watched the dark figure advance. He wasn’t quite sure *who* he was, just that whatever was about to happen couldn't be good. He felt a chill run down his spine as Mei jumped up from his seat and whirl around, “Stay right where you are or I swear I will unleash *all* of my babies on you. I won’t even blink.”

Izuku jerked his head around to see one of Kurogiri’s portals appearing right behind him and he only got more tense when Shinso stepped out, followed by someone they didn’t recognize. The cat on

Shigaraki's lap spat at the newcomer and Shigaraki had fallen into a fighting stance same as Mei.

Hitoshi held up his hand, "Whoa guys, I can explain. It's just me."

Mei eyed him suspiciously, "And where's Ochako?"

"She went to fight All Might." Hitoshi scowled. "We think it's his long last nemesis who just knocked down our front door."

"Yeah, theat's sensei." Shigaraki siad. "But who is this noob."

"I'm offended you don't recognize me Tomura, it's me, Kurogiri…" The newcomer frowned, "Shirakumo. Sorry, I'm trying to undo a decades worth of brainwashing and it's um, kind of causing problems."

Shigaraki looked like his entire world had just flipped upside down as Hitoshi confirmed, "Shirakumo is planning on pulling a Dusty and switching sides now that I got rid of All of One's brainwashing. And got some of his memories back, so he's with us. "

Iuzku glared at the two of them suspiciously, "The league has someone who can change appearances. I still need you to prove that it's you, hitoshi."

"Um, ok. " Hitoshi frowned thoughtfully, "Um…"

"She can't imitate quirks, just faces." Shigaraki said helpfully. "So just brainwash his faker and make him tell you who he *really* is. Two birds. One stone."

The man who claimed to be Kurogiri looked mildly offended, but nodded, "If that's what I have to do to prove my sincerity then I'll do it."

Hitoshi nodded. "Are you sure?"

Shirakumo took a deep breath, "Yes I am."

Hitoshi took control and winced, "I'm kinda starting to reach my limit buddy, but um, tell me who you are."

"I am Oboro Shirakumo, also known as Kurogiri."

Shinso dropped his control with a huff, "There, is that good enough"

Izuku nodded, “Yeah.”

There was another crash and Iuzku ran back to his computer. “All Might is here.”

Toshinori cured himself for being so slow, if he was still at the height of his power, he could have gathered to ua near instantly, or at least had enough resilience to catch a ride back with Uraraka after she had come to inform him about All for One’s allies attacking the school but no, as it was he had to serseved his strength and couldn't run faster than the eye could see. He’d grown even weaker since the USJ incident and especially since giving his quirk to young Uraraka. It didn't help that her constant disappearances and association with wall gremlins was quickly giving him gray hairs. All that combined to say that he’d really been hoping that All for One was as dead as he’d appeared five years ago.

But unfortunately that was clearly *not* the case.

All for One knocked him through another wall and All Might spat out another mouthful of blood as he forced himself to his feet. “I will not let you hurt my students!”

“Ironically, it’s not actually one of your students I’m after, it’s my own.” All for One replied amicably. “Well, perhaps with the exception of your successor, but she’s a slippery one.”

“You stay away from her.” Toshinori snarled. “I won't have you hurting her like you hurt Master Shimura!”

“Funny you should mention your old mentor.” All for One grinned widely. “Have I ever mentioned Tomura Shigaraki’s true identity?”

“Well, he’s an asshole” Shigaraki said. “And here I thought he would have picked up anybody he thought he could manipulate.”

Izuku and Mei had managed to get some shaky audio from the few remaining cameras, but even with the poor quality audio, they could have heard a pin drop as All for One detailed the way he had hand-picked Shigaraki just because of his connection to One for All.

Hitoshi snorted at Shigaraki’s reaction, “You just learned that the guy who raised you basically only took you in to hurt All might and that’s all you have to say?

“What? Are you saying I’m wrong” Shigaraki asked defensively “And besides, he didn’t do most of the work, his lackeys did, like kuro…shira..whatever over there.”

“If I'm allowed to put my two cents in,” Shirakumo said dryly, “may I just say that raising you was not *easy.”*

The room shook again as All Might launched forward and the titans started clashing again.

“This room is gonna come down soon.” Mei frowned. “Dust boy! Disintegrate the ceiling. Portal man! Make sure the dust doesn't get into the computers.

“Dust boy?” Shigaraki balked.

“Just do it Tomura.” Shirakumo said tiredly. “I’ll make sure debreis doesn't fall on us from above.”

“Destroy the room before it has a chance to destroy us.” Izuku nodded thoughtfully. “Smart. Not an option for the other students though. I’m gonna give the group chat a clue for how to get into the tunnels. There’s one or two places that can act as bomb shelters, so I’ll go ahead and send them a map. They just have to get there before All Might and All for One destroy the entire school….easy.”

There was a long moment of awkward silence and they all shared matching grimaces as they realized how *not easty* that would be.

Finally, Shirakumo cleared his throat, “Maybe I can help? Unlike your friend Uraraka, I specialize in transporting large amounts of people at the same time.”

“No good. “Mei said quickly. “They won’t trust you.”

“Ah, they don’t have to.” Shirakumo said sheepishly. “Not if i’m quick enough.”

Izuku blinked, “So you’re suggesting kidnapping our classmates for their own good?”

Hitoshi smiled, “Well, it won’t be the first time you to have done that!”

The room shook again and a few things fell off the shelves. Izuku’s expression hardened, “Do it.”

Ochako knew she'd be safer inside instead of holding herself in midair above the school, but even though she knew Izuku probably had eyes on the fight, she couldn't bring herself to leave. In a way, this was her fight too. She was the next holder of One for all and therefore All for One was *her* rival too. If All Might fell, she was the only one strong enough to pick up the fight.

As if on cue, all for one launched another superpowered punch at All Might, who barely managed to hold his ground. The media was starting to warm and ochako noticed a few helicopters in the air with her. "Come on All Might." Ochako muttered, "You can do this. Get up and fight him. "

All Might, however, wasn't nearly as strong as he had been. Ochako gasped as the dust and steam cleared to reveal All Might looking ragged and deflated in his smaller form. She could only imagine how the media reacted but she didn't have time to think on it because the moment she saw All Might in danger, she was suddenly right in front of him. She released her quirk and landed in a crouch, slowly standing and doing her best to stare down All for One when he *didn't have eyes.*

"I think it's time we finally met." Ochako said, doing her best to keep her voice from shaking. "I'm Ochako Urarka, the ninth holder of One for All and I'm here to take you down."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: January 27, 2022 (MST)

Anger

Chapter Summary

The attack on UA comes to a climax.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Has anyone seen Shinso or Ochako?!” Mina yelled. “I can’t find them anywhere!””

The hallway was crowded with both hero and support course students as almost every single person currently on campus huddled together to try and find some protection. The building kept shaking like it was going to collapse, but Cementoss had, so far, been pretty good at keeping things from splitting apart. He’d only be able to last for so long though, so everyone with a shielding quirk was getting ready for action. She was too, even though she could only hope that her acid would be faster than the falling debris, but she was determined to do whatever she could. They would have evacuated...if they weren’t sure that whatever was going on out there was 100 times worse than whatever they were experiencing. Yeah, no, going outside was not going to happen.

There was a swirl of mist and everyone screamed as the entire group was suddenly consumed by a purple cloud of the stuff. It was like the USJ all over again and Mei felt the floor disappear from underneath her feet as they were teleported to a room even smaller than the hallway they’d been in before. The villains they’d caught had gotten teleported too, but to Mina’s surprise, they were still with the group instead of getting teleported back to the villain’s base.

A loud voice cut through the panic, “Hello everyone, it’s me, Cheat Code, please calm down!”

Reluctantly, the students stopped pushing at each other and looked toward a speaker embedded in the wall, “All Might is fighting a villain outside and it’s unsafe both for the heroes and the villains to be in the main school right now. You are still at UA, just in a bomb shelter that is highly rated enough to keep you safe. If you have any other

questions, please ask Nedzu."

Mina looked around in confusion before she realized that Nedzu, Aizawa, and Todoroki, alongside what looked like a detective, who hadn't been with the group before, had been teleported to...well, to relative safety alongside them.

"Well," Nedzu smiled, "This is an interesting development!"

"What in the world do you think you're doing?!" Izuku yelled at the screen. "He beat All Might, you can't fight him!"

"I have to go help her." Hitoshi paced restlessly. "I have to…"

He tried to go for the door, but Kurogiri portaled him back to the center of the room, "No, you'll only get yourself killed. "

Hitoshi turned to him with a glare, "I have to protect her."

"Do you have One for All?" Mei huffed. "No, so sit down and we'll figure out a way to help her without you charging in like an idiot!"

"What's the support gear he's wearing?" Izuku muttered. "Is it something to strengthen his quirks or just some kind of body armor? Either way, disabling that…"

"Could be deadly." Shigaraki finished. "It's actually his life support. All Might did a lot of damage in their last fight."

Izuku's face lit up, "Even better. We disable his life support and we give Uraraka a fighting chance. Shigaraki, I need to know everything you know about it. I'm sure you know a little bit about technology, being a gamer and all."

Shigaraki grinned, "Yeah, I guess I'm not a complete noob. It's a bit different than a gaming system, but I know enough weak points to point out your targets."

"Good." Izuku ran a quick inventory to figure out which of the school defenses were still functional. "Let's hear it."

"Young Uraraka!" All Might said desperately. "Get away from here! Now!"

"No." Ochako didn't look away from All for One. "This is my fight too,

All Might."

"Ah, so the girl actually knows what it means to hold One for All." All for One laughed. "Did you tell her, or did she have to figure it out on her own?"

Ochako ignored a stab of anger at the insult and shifted her stance, "What's important is that I'm not going to let you hurt me or anyone else ever again."

Even without eyes, the patronizing expression on his face was obvious, "Oh my child, that's what all the other holders said as well."

Ochako yelled and ran forward.

All for One sounded almost bored, "Air cannon times five."

Ochako barely teleported out of the way in time, slowed down by having to grab All Might and get him out of the way too, "Get out of here, I can handle this."

"No. you can't." All for One walked toward her. "You don't stand a…."

He was cut off as something exploded underneath him and Ochako smiled as she realized that Izuku must be weaponizing the playing field, "I think you underestimate me and my friends."

"You can't follow a trapper." Mineta called out. "I know you're there."

Spinner dropped from the ceiling and drew his Katana, "You're the one who killed Stain."

"No." Mineta lied. "The heroes did."

"A false hero did." Spinner shot back. "And I think a traitor like you fits that definition perfectly. You can't argue with it anyway, I *know* . He told me."

"Who?" Mineta panicked momentarily. All for One wouldn't have betrayed him. He didn't have any reason to...right?

"Stain." Spinner tapped his head. "That brainwasher destroyed the walls between us and now I can hear him perfectly. You killed him."

"So what if I did?" Mineta huffed and grabbed a ball from his head. "Killing him was easy, so do you really think *you'll* stand a chance

against me? Don't be ridiculous."

"Oh, you're not just fighting me." The building shook and MIneta struggled to keep his footing, but Spinner just used his quirk to stick himself to the floor. He crawled forward like a lizard, unbothered by the shaking floor, and Mineta tried to dodge, but ended up falling to the floor as another violent tremor passed through. Spinner bit MIneta's arm as he passed and then stood up, licking blood from his lips. "You're fighting both me and Stain."

Mineta felt a shot of fear rip through him as his body went stiff and fell to the floor. He had to get out of this. Sensei would save him...no, no one would save him. For the first time, it was *him* who was stuck and not his prey.

The building stopped shaking and Spinner stalked forward, drawing his Katana, "And now it's time for you to die."

"Alright, so what next?" Izuku asked. "We've done just a generic explosion, which should have done a little damage."

"Explosions are really only useful if they can clog up his air filters with the smoke." Shigaraki said. "He's got a really high hp, but his constitution is low if we can disable his equipment."

"Alright." Izuku pressed a few buttons. "Smoke bombs it is. What else can I disable?"

"That depends." Shigaraki grinned. "Do you have access to tasers?"

All for One was not doing well. He still hadn't managed to land a single hit on that darn girl because she simply kept teleporting out of the way. She'd learned after the first time that she had to put All Might out of his sight, so he had no idea where his nemesis was and there was a severe lack of other hostages to use. He'd tried using the media helicopters, but she had simply gotten *them* out of the way as well….or well, the people, considering that the helicopters themselves almost fell on him without anyone driving them. She couldn't match him in physical strength, but in speed and strategy, he would almost be tempted to admit she was superior. He, however, was All for one.

It would have been simpler if he could see the other enemy fighting him. He knew it was Cheat Code, the way the school's remaining defenses were being weaponized against him made that obvious

enough, but without knowing where the nuisance was, it was impossible to take them out. His air filters were already giving him issues from all the smoke in the area and All for One was almost certain that Cheat Code was doing that on purpose. And if he knew about the air filter, that meant that choices were high that Tomura was with him and feeding him information. His path forward was simple then, he simply had to find both his target in One fell sweep. It should be an easy task for the symbol of evil. All Mights' successor made another run at him and he readied another attack to push her away, but she disappeared before he could even launch it. In his brief moment of distraction, however, little robotic bugs started climbing up his legs. He went to brush them away when he was hit with a massive shock and all of the sudden, it was Much more difficult to breath. They had fried his life support systems.

"All right. Time to stop playing around." All for One grunted. "Kinetic energy times ten."

"Did my babies do good, Izu-kun?" Mei bounced up and down. "I gave the spider bots the taser marbles and put them exactly where dust boy said!"

"Your babies did amazing, Mei-chan." Izuku grinned. "You can already tell he's looking a little rougher and…"

He was cut off by Kurogiri suddenly snatching him up with a portal and dropping them all with the other students. "My apologies, but that room wasn't going to be safe anymore. You did well, Cheat Code, but um, you also may have managed to make All for One angry. I'll get your friend and All Might and get them here as well."

Izuku nodded, "Ok, good luck."

It was around the time he disappeared that all of the gathered students finally got over their shock and exploded with questions.

"What are the villains doing here?"

"Are you working with the league?"

"You're Cheat Code?!"

Izuku gulped and reached for Mei's hand, "This is why I hide behind a computer."

Shouta stared at the man who had brought back All Might and Uraraka. The quirk was Kurogiri's, obviously, but the face, that was Shirakumo. When he saw him the first time, he'd been half convinced that his eyes were playing tricks on him, but now, seeing him again, he cannot deny the similarities. How in the world had he ended up with the villains?

Shouta glanced over at Hizashi, who seemed to be going through the same thought process he was. Shouta swallowed, "Do you think it's really…?"

Hiszashi took a deep breath, "Well, there's only one way to find out."

He pushed his way across the crowded room and marched straight up to the Shirakumo look-alike, who was currently on the floor playing with the cat that seemed to hang around Shigaraki and Todoroki, "Shirakumo is that you?"

He looked up and gave them a far too familiar smile, "Hizashi, Shouta?! It's been forever!"

"Yeah." Mic's voice sounded choked, "Yeah it has."

Before either of them had time to react, Mic had pulled Oboro to his feet and trapped them both in a big hug.

Oboro laughed and hugged them both tighter, "I guess I've got some explaining to do, huh?"

Shotua pulled away and raised an eyebrow, "You think?"

Oboro gave a wet laugh, wiping tears from his eyes. "Yeah, I mean, it's still a little fuzzy for me too, but this kid, one of your students, I'm pretty sure, he saved me and helped break the brainwashing I was under and everything that All for one used to control me. Um, uh, where did he go…"

"Uh…"

Shouta looked to see Hitohi standing with Uraraka and staring at them in shock, "Do you guys know each other?"

"Oh yeah. I was just talking about you!" Oboro grinned. "This is the kid who saved me."

Shouta felt himself tearing up as he put his arm around Hitoshi's

shoulder, “I guess then, that you’ve already met our son, Hitoshi.”

All for One ripped the walls apart. He could tell Cheat Code had been there, a technology mapping quirk let him know that the camera feeds from the front of the school were still being piped into the giant computer until he destroyed it with a single punch. The ceiling had been disintegrated away, so Shigaraki had been there as well, and they were gone, so Kurogiri had been there too. Though the fact that their teleporter was apparently helping the heroes was inconvenient at best. Oh well, just one more name to add to his extermination list. There was nothing left to find here and neither All Might nor his infuriating successor had shown their faces again so All for One stalked away, breathing heavily through his mask now that his life support had been made useless by that stuipid eclectic attack. He was on a timer to end his fight quickly, which was quite the feat when all of his opponents were *cowards!*

“You’re not a difficult man to find.”

All for One turned around slowly, sensing Spinner behind him. “Ah Spinner, it is nice to know that not all of my forces are useless.”

“You see, that’s where you're mistaken. “Spinner said. “I am no longer part of your forces.”

All for One scowled, “Oh really?”

“Yes.” Spinner said. “My mind has been freed and I finally see clearly. You see, heroes did not kill Stain. “

All for One felt a hint of annoyance, “Oh?”

“I’ve already disposed of your little traitor.” Spinner informed him. “Now it’s your turn.”

If All for One still had eyes, he would have rolled them. “I just beat All Might, you can't expect to hold a candle against me”

“You see, that’s where you’re wrong.” Spinner raised his kanatna and ran forward. “Things are only impossible if you lack conviction!”

All for One sighed, ignoring the pain in his lungs as he batted the lizard away with one hand, “I don’t have time for theis get out of my way.”

“No!” Spinner growled, getting to his feet. “Your time is up!”

He ran at All for One again, then again, then again, and each time, All for One butted him away like it was nothing, but i wasn’t. His breathing was getting more and more labored. He needed to get back to the doctor, and quickly. As much as he hated it, the best course of action would be to retreat and then dispose of his enemies another day. How amazing.

Suddenly his body locked up and he fell to the floor, knocking his head against the concrete on his way down and shattering his mask.

“That’s the thing about conviction!” Spinner said, raising his katana above All for One’s neck. “Much like blood, a little goes a long way.”

All for One winced as the katana came down. All those plans and he didn’t even get to enjoy the outcome.

Nedzu looked out over the ruins of UA and sighed, “We are going to have to rebuild this entire school…perhaps we should make a few changes while we’re at it.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: January 28, 2022 (MST)

Reconstruction

Chapter Summary

UA gets a makeover.

Chapter Notes

Memes!
X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku put the last of his notebooks into his backpack and walked out of his empty room. The service that UA had hired to help all the students move into the dorms was already there and Mom fretted nervously as they carried Izuku's boxes out of the apartment, "Baby, are you sure you want to move into the dorms? I know they said they may as well build them, since they're rebuilding everything else, but it just seems so hard having you so far away…"

"I'll be close to my friends." Izuku said tiredly. "And I'll be surrounded by heroes, Mom. I'll be fine."

They'd had the same discussion twenty times that week, twice just this morning as he was packing up the last of everything, which only reaffirmed his decision to move out. He'd be closer to his labs and his new computer setup in case of another attack and he'd get to spend more time with Mei and his friends. It didn't make it any easier to say goodbye when Mom was hugging him with tears in her eyes, though.

"I'm not going to be gone forever." Izuku insisted. "I'll still visit on the weekends and everything!"

"I know!" Mom sniffled. "But it just feels...oh you're going to be so far away. At least you'll be protected and safe with all those heroes. I don't want you getting swept up in any more of those villain attacks, you could have been hurt so badly."

Izuku gave her a strained smile. The school had tried telling her about his involvement in the villain attacks, but all she'd heard was that he was the victim, not that he was one of the people trying to prevent the attacks, and it had just made her worry more. It gave Izuku a little more leverage for his argument to move into the dorms, but it still left a bad taste in his mouth.

“I’d better get going.” Izuku said. “Mei’s probably already there looking over blueprints, so…”

Mom frowned, “You’re going to be living *very* close to your girlfriend, Izuku. Um...do we need to talk about…”

Izuku went bright red and shook his head, “No! Uh, sorry, no, it’s just, she’s way more interested in making her babies than...you know, *making babies* or anything.”

Mom sighed in relief, “Ok. just so you know, if you ever have questions, I’m here.”

“Ok.” Izuku smiled. “Well, um, I’d better get going. Bye.”

He gave her a final hug and walked out the door.

Hitoshi fiddled with the ribbon on the daisies while he waited for Ochako to pick him up, “You don’t think the flowers are too much?”

“Definitely not,” Mic answered quickly. “Everyone loves flowers.”

“I’m sure she’ll love them.” Aizawa added. “And the two of you are so awkward already that even if it’s the wrong move, she probably won’t care.”

“Shou!” Mic punched him in the arm. “You can’t just say that!”

“Why not?” Aizawa grinned wickedly. “It’s true!”

“Don't listen to him.” Mic huffed “You’ll be fine.”

Their entire apartment was a mess of boxes and half-packed suitcases and Hitoshi was pretty sure he should have picked literally any other day for their first official date, but he hadn’t known that they were going to be instituting brand new dorms when he’d suggested going out for mochi today. Since both of his adults were teachers, they had a brand new apartment on campus that they didn’t have to pay rent for, so, as Dad would say, it was only logical to move. It still didn’t make today any less stressful or chaotic.

“I feel like I should be picking her up.” Hitoshi said. “Isn’t the guy supposed to pick the girl up for the first date?”

“For right now, Uraraka still lives two hours away.” Dad said. “And she can teleport. You picking her up would be illogical.”

Hitoshi groaned. “I know you’re right, it’s just...I want to do this right, you know?”

Mic smiled and brushed a bit of imaginary dust from HItoshi’s shoulder, “That’s what the flowers are for. You’re gonna do great, son.”

Hitoshi took a deep breath and let it out. “O-ok.”

Aizawa nodded proudly, “You’ve been through like three life or death situations with this girl now, a date is gonna be a piece of cake.”

Ochako appeared right next to him, “What's gonna be a piece of cake?”

“Me convincing my husband to eat an actual meal and not just coffee.” Mic said quickly.

“Fat chance.” Aizawa shot back. “It’s got multiple food groups. Therefore, logically, it qualifies as a meal.”

Mic pouted, “There’s nothing logical about it.”

Aizawa just grinned in response, “You two stay safe, call us if there’s any villain attacks.”

“And have fun!” Mic added. “Don't forget that!”

Ochako smiled, “Oh that’ll be easy with Shindig around.” She turned to Hitoshi. “Are you ready?”

“Definitely.” Hitoshi held out the flowers hesitantly. “And, um, these are for you. If you want them. If you don’t, they were my adults’ idea.”

“Oh, I want them.” Ochako turned bright red and took the bouquet, “Thank you. I love them.”

She held out her hand for him to take and then stopped, “Oh, uh, actually I forgot. I don’t have an anchor at the Mochi place...oops. We might have to walk.”

Hitoshi smiled and took her hand anyway, “It’s ok. That just means I get to spend more time with you.”

Shouto looked at the setup that Shigaraki had planned and shook his

head, “I can’t believe they’re letting you have an entire gaming setup in a prison cell.”

Because Shigaraki’s information had been essential to protecting the students during the attack on UA, Principal Nedzu had taken responsibility for him. His crimes were too great for traditional house arrest, but he’d been given a cell underneath UA that was basically an extra-secure apartment that locked from the outside and he was allowed to have visitors. Nedzu had even installed a door just big enough for Epurr to fit in, since she’d decided to follow her kittens to the dorms rather than stay in Murder Alley. Shigaraki had brought all his gaming consoles and, once Powerloader had checked them over for security reasons, he’d been allowed to create his own set up.

“Well, it’s not like they set me to Tartarus or anything, so that’s nice.” Shigaraki shrugged. “Plus, it’s not like I can step out of line. If I remove these stupid gloves or make a move to use my quirk, the room will instantly fill with some sort of sedative gas and I’ll be knocked out before I could even hurt the cat.”

Epurr hissed from her place on his gaming chair, but when she saw Shigaraki didn’t mean it, she yawned and went back to sleep.

Shouto laughed, “Be careful, I think Epurr might get to you before UA’s defenses will.”

“No, but I think she’s going to smother me in my sleep.” Shigaraki said. “How she gets along with the rat principal I have no idea. Are you ready to start the stream?”

“Sure.” Shouto shrugged. “Is everything already set up?”

Shigaraki rolled his eyes, “Like I have anything else to do.”

Shouto took a seat on the second chair as Shigaraki glared at Epurr, “Move you stupid cat.”

“Just put her on your lap or something.” Shouto said. “Come on, hurry up.”

“Whatever.” Shigaraki scooped up Epurr and dumped her in Shouto’s lap. “Your cat, your problem.”

Epurr gave a disgruntled meow, but settled down on the left half of Shouto’s lap. He sighed, “Fine, but she’s going to wear you down eventually, you know that right?”

“I can pretend.” Shigaraki did a final check that everything was working and then started the stream, “Hello everyone, sorry we dropped off the face of the earth, we got arrested.”

“You mean *I* got arrested, which was your fault by the way.” Shouto deadpanned. “You turned yourself in, it doesn’t count.”

“Yeah?” Shigaraki challenged. “And who’s streaming from a jail cell right now?”

Shouto smiled, “Technically both of us.”

A look at the chat confirmed that everyone, as usual, assumed they were joking. Their fans were going to get a nasty shock if the two of them ever decided to turn on their cameras.

Mei was already at the school, or what there was left of it. They had put first priority on completing the dorms so that the students could move in, but the rest of the school was still a giant mess of construction and wet concrete. About a third of the school had been completely destroyed and three quarters had been damaged in some way or another.

The good thing was that no civilians had been injured during the attack and student injuries had been kept to a minimum and were mostly just from the students getting caught in the gas attack. Most of the villains had been injured in some capacity with the exception of Dabi who had left before the attack was over, but the only deaths had been All for One and Mineta, who had both shown evidence of being killed by Spinner, not the heroes.

The days since the attack had been a whirlwind of activity, especially for the support course students who were all helping with the reconstruction. Izuku and Mei had spent most of that time helping to redesign the tunnels and making some manual defenses that didn’t rely on electricity as a power source.

In other news, they had learned that trebuchets were a lot of fun.

The labs weren’t complete yet, so Mei had set up a miniature lab in the common room of their dorms and Izuku smiled as he watched her fiddle with the prototypes they’d made yesterday, “You look like you’re having fun. Is your stuff already moved in?”

“The movers are still bringing it over.” Mei said without looking up.

“You?”

“I'm in the same boat.” Izuku said. “So, what do you want to work on until then.”

Mei grinned and pulled out some blueprints, “Well, I was thinking of some ways we could make the tunnels a lot more fun!”

Chapter End Notes

Final Update: January 29, 2022 (MST)

Heroes

Chapter Summary

Nedzu makes an offer

Chapter Notes

Memes!
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Izuku and Mei were in a construction tent that was currently doubling as Nedzu's office.

"Do you think Nedzu wants to talk about the tunnels or the trebuchets?" Mei asked. "Ooh! Maybe he has a new project he wants us to work on!"

"I'm not sure." Izuku hummed. "Don't get too excited though. He probably just asked us to come so we could talk about logistics."

Nedzu's voice rang out behind them, "In a way, you are both correct."

Izuku and Mei looked to see Nedzu walking into the tent.

"So….we have a new project?" Mei asked hopefully.

"Of a sort." Nedzu said, taking a seat. "I"m sure you're aware that the provisional licensing exam for our hero students is mere weeks away."

"Yeah." Izuku nodded. "Do you want us to give everyone another analysis? Or maybe help them train one on one in preparation for the exam?"

"No." Nedzu smiled. "I would like you to take the exam."

The walk to the mochi shop was nice. It was a warm day and even though he didn't have to, Hitoshi held her hand the whole way. Ochako felt like her face was on fire and she really hoped her naturally pink cheeks disguised at least some of the blush but knew that was probably hoping for too much.

Finally, Hitohi broke the silence, "What do you think of the new dorms?"

“It’s kinda weird.” Ochako said. “I just barely moved back in with my parents and now I’m gonna be moving out again, it’s just a lot of moving.”

“Well, you’re a teleporter.” HItoshi smiled, “You’re always going to be Ocha-going someplace or another.”

Ochako shot him a playful glare and he laughed, nudging her slightly and they walked the last block to the Mochi shop in comfortable silence.

Izuku stared at Nedzu in disbelief, “What?!” We’re not heroes, we’re support. We don’t want to be heroes.”

“What Izuku said.” Mei nodded. “I’m not abandoning my babies.”

Nedzu held up his hand in a calming gesture. “We’re not asking you to. You would still be primarily in support, but what with your prominent involvement in every villain attack we’ve experienced so far this year, not to mention the increased danger that will come now that your identity as Cheat Code is more widely known, it only makes sense for you to be able to defend yourselves, both in terms of skill and legality. And, of course, in order to do so most effectively, you would need hero licenses!”

“But we don’t *want* hero licenses.” Mei said simply. “Licenses mean work and time that I could be using to perfect my babies, so no thank you!”

“It also means *using* those inventions to help others.” Nedzu pointed out. “Which you have already proven that you are capable of doing with great effect. The licenses would simply give you more freedom and resources to do what you have already been doing of your own perogative.”

“But we don’t want to be heroes.” Izuku stood up. “And even if I *did* want to be a hero, which I don’t, I *can’t.* ”

Nedzu tilted his head, “And why do you say that?”

Izuku looked at him incredulously, “Um, because I’m quirkless? I thought that was obvious by now.”

“Ah,” Nedzu looked at him sadly. “I suppose your reaction makes much more sense now, even if I do not agree.”

Izuku stopped, “What?”

“The idea that a quirkless person cannot become a hero is, quite happily, incorrect.” Nedzu chirped. “Of course, there will be more difficulties, but you excel at overcoming every obstacle in your path, so I have no doubt of your capabilities and there are no laws preventing it, so yes, I believe it is perfectly possible for you to become a hero.”

Izuku shook his head, “Look, I gave up on that dream a long time ago…”

“Be that as it may,” Nedzu interrupted, “getting licensed is still the best course of action. You may not have had any legal ramifications from your involvement thus far, but if you keep assisting as you have been and performing heroics without a license, that will not always be the case.”

“But we’re not performing heroics.” Mei argued. “We’re acting as *support,* which is what we want to do. That’s why we came to UA in the first place.”

“Yeah.” Izuku agreed. “What we’re doing isn’t hero work.”

“You are saving people.” Nedzu shrugged. “I fail to see the difference.”

“I’ve never wanted to be a hero.” Mei said. “It would take my focus away from my babies.”

“It would also give you better opportunities to advertise them.” Nedzu smiled. “Imagine seeing a hero use their own inventions and trusting their life to them, how much more enticing would those inventions look, both to the public and to other heroes. Much more effective than a traditional commercial, don’t you think?”

Mei bit her lip, “Well, when you put it like that…”

“How about I let you think on it?” Nedzu suggested. “You two can talk it over and tell me your decision by tonight. That way we can properly adjust your schedules for the upcoming semester. I assure you that you will still be primarily students of Class 1F, but you will be joining class 1A for subjects such as heroics and combat. You would be both support and heroes...support heroes, if you would.”

Izuku and Mei shared a look. They had a lot to think about.

Hitoshi smiled as he overlooked the large variety of Mochi they'd ended up with, "You know, this is probably too much mochi for two people."

Ochako hummed, "That's what a coward would say. What, Shindig? Aren't you up for a challenge."

"Oh I'm always up for a challenge." Hitoshi smirked. "Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to catch a teleporter."

Ochako blushed and ducked her head, "I guess not."

"Oh..uh, my adoption papers are going to be coming through soon." Hitoshi said. "It's weird timing right when we're having to pack everything up for the dorms."

"How is that even going to work?" Ochako's eyes widened. "The dorms, not the adoption, obviously not. Oh my goodness. I am so sorry, uh, congratulations."

Hitoshi managed to hold back for a few seconds before bursting into laughter., "Well, for the adoption, you see when two men love each other very much…"

Ochako hit his arm, "Oh stunt up, you realize I can just leave right?"

Hitoshi gave her a cocky smile, "And yet you're still here."

Ochako raised an eyebrow, "I don't have to be."

Hitoshi smirked, "They're giving my adults an apartment on campus so they can hang around and respond if there's any issues in the dorm or whatever. I get a normal dorm like everyone else, but I'll also have a room at the apartment if I want it. It's just kinda up to me."

Ochako nodded, "It sounds like fun. I'm just glad you're in 1A now. It would be so weird if you had to live in the 1C dorm. I mean, it's gonna be weird enough with Mei and Izuku livinig in 1F.

"Let's be honest," Hitoshi. Rolled his eyes. "Those two are going to be living in the tunnels. The rat's already practically adopted them, so they may as well just make their home in the maze."

Ochako laughed, "Yeah, they're probably there now."

Izuku paced back and forth in one of the few areas of the school that had been completed Mei sat on the floor working on her latest project as Izuku paced. “You’re going to give yourself motion sickness.’

Izuku slumped down onto the floor with a huff, “What gives them the right to tell me I can be a hero *now* of all times, Mei-chan? I begged to be a hero for 10 years, that’s a whole decade and *everyone* told me no, even my mom. But now that I’ve given up and found a new goal and am finally in a good place, now all of sudden, it was possible all along?! How does that even make any sense? What gives them the right to suddenly change their minds like that.”

“In his defense,” Mei said, “Nedzu was never one of the ones who told you that.”

“My old principal did.” Izuku argued. “And my teachers and Kacchan and everybody else. I finally accepted that it was impossible, Mei . I found a new dream and I even held a pity party for goodness sake! I threw a goddamn mental funeral for my old dream! What gives them the right to tell me I can be a hero after I put in all that work to come to terms with the fact that I couldn’t?”

Mei put down her invention and reached for his hand, “You’re being an idiot.”

She turned away and started tinkering with her tools again while Izuku stared at her in shock, “Excuse me, I thought girlfriends were supposed to be supportive.”

“Not when you’re bing stupid.” Mei said simply. “I put a lot of work into inventions that never work out, but does that mean I shouldn’t try? No! Even if it blows up in my face, it was still worth the work I put into it because I learned something from it. You’re just over there giving into the sunk cost fallacy, so no, I’m not going to agree with you. You’re being stupid.”

Izuku froze, “Oh…”

Mei snorted, “Yep. It doesn't matter what work you’ve already put in, you can’t change that. What you can change is what you do now. I think Nedzu’s right. Being heroes will give us a really great opportunity to market our inventions and give us more resources to do what we’ve already been doing, but you’re my partner, so I’m not doing it without you.”

Izuku took a deep breath and took Mei's hand before walking into the classroom. Aizawa greeted them with a nod and Hitoshi and Ochako smiled at them while the rest of the class exchanged glances of confusion. Izuku squeezed Mei's hand a little tighter and gave a little wave, "Hello everyone."

"Class, you already know Cheat Code." Aizawa said. "Shinso. Would you like to introduce us to our friends and explain a little bit about why they're here?"

"Yeah." Hitoshi stood up with a grin. "Everybody, these are my kidnappers, Izuku Midoirya and Mei Hatsume and they are going to be heroes."

End Notes

This fic has a Tv Tropes page and a Discord.
If you want to yell at me, please leave a comment or find me on tiktok or tumblr.
I am fine with any translations or fanworks based on my stories. My only rule is that if you post something based on my writing, give me the link so I can enjoy it as well!

Works inspired by this one

Cheat Code: Cryptid by Wolves_Of_England, A Nail in a World of Rust by PsuedoVillainz, The Analyst by aicyel, (UP FOR ADOPTION) And Then There Were... Five? by fantasyangelo, The Mystery of Hitoshi Shinsou by orphan_account, Love Letter Analyst by luminous_lily12, Y'know what? Fuck You by HattedPenguin420, Against All Odds by Galex_exe, My Brother, My Brother, and Me: A Villain Group for the Modern Era by Stormy_Person, An Arrow in a Field of Crosses by Longreach (orphan_account), Cheat Code: Support Strategist - USJ WatchFic by Gothicelfs, Izuku Midoriya: Behind The Screen by orphan_account, "For The Want Of A Nail" things can change by HeadcaseKiller, Jumpstart your Destiny! by Space_Ghost_With_The_Most, All for the want of a horseshoe nail by Fandom_Compass, Oh, that's me by StarryEyedGuy (Kadencrafter78), Hero Academia Counterpoints: The Devil's in the Details by nightcrawler2000, To Be Human by HattedPenguin420, FTWOAN, Beyond the fourth wall! by Diana_Soot, Fandom_Compass, Justdumb05, Not_The_State, Gears, Grease, and Gremlins by MusiciansMaid, When Paths Intersect (And Break) by FieldsOfSouls, Voidful_Abyss, UA Teachers Babysit Alternate Selves of the School's Problem Child by HihiImMimi, and then there were five by orphan_account, Reacting to the FTWOAN Series by CrazyHope13, They Are Not The Same (Not Fully At The Very Least) by PancakeFlowers, No Life is Carved in Stone by StrayCatRunning, All Found Families Start With

Crimes! -A guide by Todoroki Shouto on how to redeem your worstie! by orphan_account, Five Problem Children? by 1zu_00 (orphan_account), The Complexities of DNA by Glitter_Lips

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